

T R I N I T Y S E V E N

トリニティセブン

The Novel

7人の魔書使い

ナイトエピソード
深夜挿話
と
ロストメモリー
過去記憶

サイトウケンジ

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Illustration

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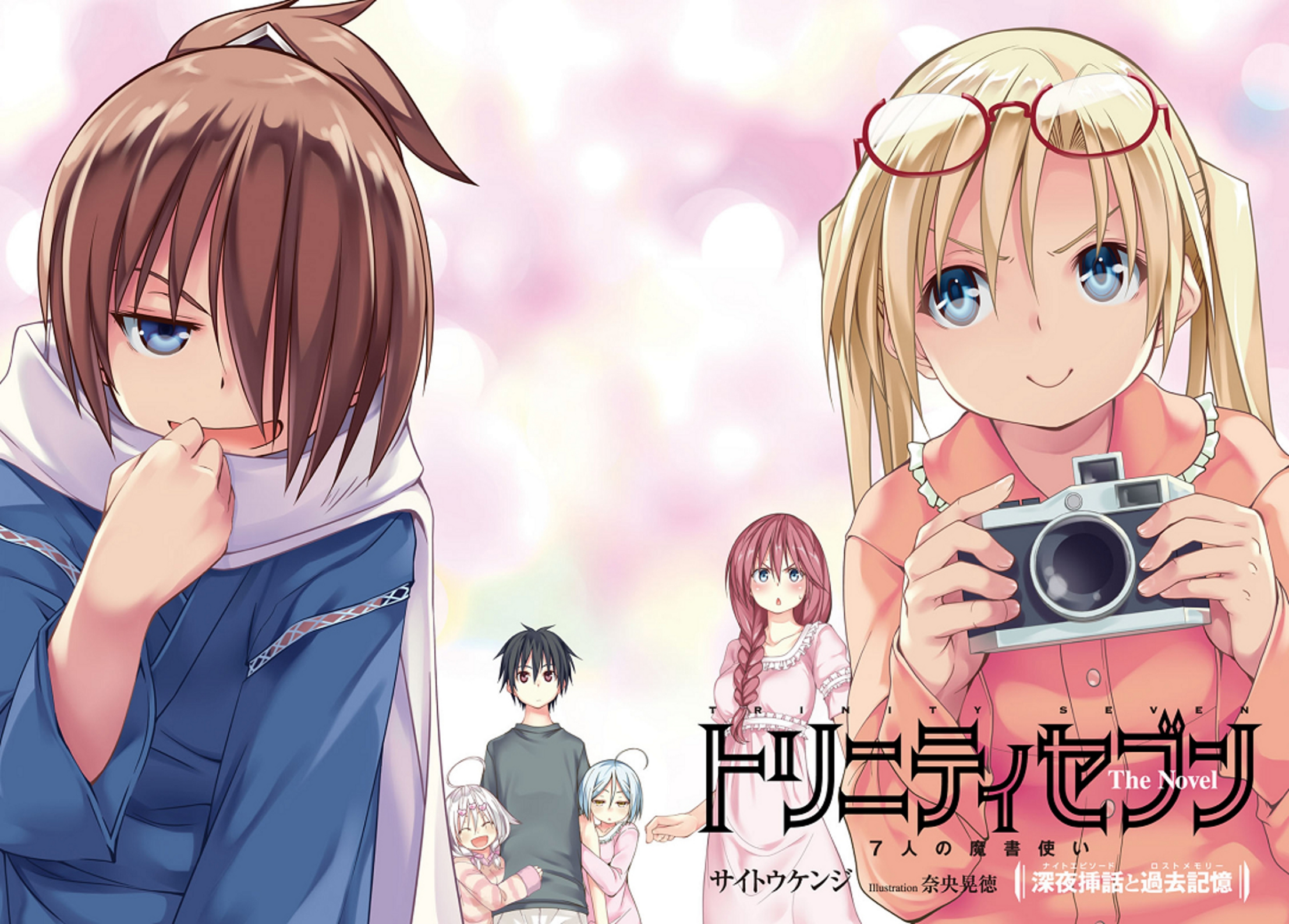
DRAGON COMICS AGE

A full-page illustration of a young woman with long, vibrant red hair. She is wearing a white short-sleeved dress with a dark grey necktie and a dark grey pleated skirt. She also wears black thigh-high stockings and brown loafers. She is posed in a dynamic, slightly crouching position, looking towards the viewer with a bright, happy expression. Her right hand is raised behind her head, and her left arm is bent. The background is plain white.

TRINITY SEVEN

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The author : Kenji Saitou
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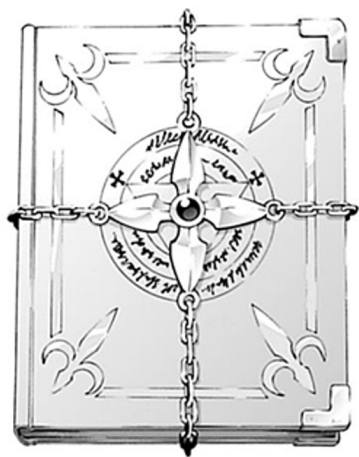
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著者：サイトウケンジ

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ドラゴンコミックスエイジ



O1

Prologue

Prologue

As long as humans live in the world of humans, they are bound to the “principles of the world”.

They cannot move things without their hands, neither can they lit a fire without tools. They cannot fly through the air without arrangements and it is absolutely impossible to move through time.

Since the dawn of history, in other words, since the birth of humanity, their intelligence has solved countless mysteries and overcome many of the endless “impossibilities”.

Yet, there are still a lot of things humans are not capable of.

Yes, as long as they are bound to the “principles of the world”, humans are only allowed to live within these principles.

However, some humans opposed the principles of the world and learned “magic”.

“Magic” is the exact opposite from the elements that make up the world.

It can bring phenomena or beings into existence that normally would never exist.

Everything commonly known as devils, monsters or apparitions are a product of “magic”.

They continued to study techniques to move things without their hands for a vertiginous long time. They worked out a method to lit fire without tools from a forbidden technique and did not hesitate to adopt a skill of the different dimension to fly through the air, nor

did they fear to make contact with an existence from a higher dimension than humans to be able to cross time.

It was the result of crazy experiments and research that no normal human could ever perform.

In the recent years, a field of studying called sorcery was finally established.

The “seven deadly sins” are the furthest separated from the “principles of the world”.

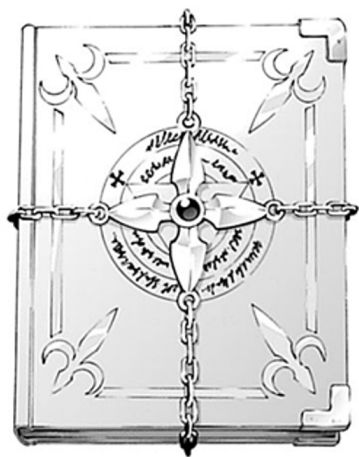
“Superbia”, “Avaritia”, “Invidia”, “Ira”, “Gula”, “Luxuria”, “Acedia”.

These very sins by which humans gets judged in life, are the connection to “magic”.

The seven sins are called “archive” and those, who learn “magic” by researching the “archives” and pass it on to change the current world and advance the ages to come, are called mages.

Amongst these mages, there are seven people, who arrived at the pinnacle of sorcery.

They are called the “Trinity Seven”.



02

パジャマパーティー ドリームトーク
深夜会合と夢語り

Chapter 01: Pyjama Party & Dream Talk

The world was engulfed in darkness.

I couldn't see anything. I couldn't hear anything. I couldn't feel anything.

It was such an absolute isolation that I didn't even know if I had a body myself.

Right now, I couldn't even feel my very own presence... the presence of Kasuga Arata.

Therefore— I somewhat understood.

That this was the end of the world.

Before long, even my consciousness would vanish and everything would be gone.

The end of the world.

Have I wished for this?

Have I lived to bring this about?

Have I—

“No.”

My body, which I didn't know if it existed, let out a voice.

Instantly, the realisation that I “exist” here befell me.

Though I didn't feel anything.

Though I couldn't see anything.

Surely something must be ahead...!!

SQUISH

I felt a pleasant softness and proper firmness in my extended hand.

My consciousness awoke at once.

* * *

“Unyan♪ ”

A lovely voice sounded in my ears.

My right hand was groping the voluminous breast of the sleeping girl in front of me.

“Arata-oniisan... so bold, nyan♪ ”

“I see.”

The girl with the small body and big bust was Kurata Yui.

One of my friends that studied together with my at the Royal Biblia Academy.

I would always try to grab something when I wake up. And if there was a girl next to me, I would grope her breasts. That was my habit. Quite a nice habit, if I may say so.

“Now then, seeing as Yui is here...”

Still groping her breast, I only turned my head around.

Another girl was clinging to me on my left side.

Kannazuki Arin. Yet another one of my friends...

“So you found out, my husband.”

The girl claimed to be my wife with an inexpressive look and voice.

“Yeah, so you two are wearing pyjamas.”

“Guess so♪ “

The two of them had snuck into my bed of their own accord before, but they had been naked at that time.

That had been good in itself and a feast to the eyes.

“Lilith-sensei would get angry when we sleep together naked after all.”

And back then, we really had gotten one hell of a lecture.

Thus, they were wearing pyjamas now. Then all was well. Yes.

“Okay, then we can sleep in peace!”

“Yes~♪ “ “Yes, my husband.”

Flanked by two beautiful girls, I tried to go back to sleep, when...

BAM!

“Arata! You have brought in Yui-san and Arin-san again!?”

The one, who flung open the door, was Asami Lilith aka “Lilith-sensei”.

While she was the same age as me, she was a prodigious girl that got a teaching position due to her ingenious magic skills and endeavours. Her outward appearance was certainly beautiful, but her figure was amazing as well.

And she looked quite mature in her pyjama from which her breasts, a real feast for the eyes just like that, bulged out.

“Yo, Lilith.”

She must have figured out what was going on here the moment she entered.

After all, my right hand was still groping Yui’s breast.

“Ah... Ahh!”

Seeing us like that, Lilith turned red and pointed at us.

“Mm.”

Personally, Lilith surely would like to scold us for an illicit relationship such as sleeping together, but seeing as the two girls abided her previous order, her soft side as a teacher, telling her to forgive them for this, kicked in and she didn’t know what to say.

Still, at this rate, Lilith would explode nevertheless, as she disliked illicit relationships.

In that case, I might get to see hell again.

Since I wasn't all too fond of that, my only choice was to smooth it over skilfully.

Good.

"Sorry, Lilith. I should've brought you over first."

"Eh...!?"



Seeing Lilith turn bright red up to her ears, I made a guts pose.

“Then I’ll make myself comfortable at Onii-san’s legs and leave the upper body to Lilith-sensei ♪ “

“I have no intention to yield the back of my husband.”

Yui crawled under the blanket and Arin tightly clung to my back.

All three could sleep next to me if they moved together in this bed, huh?

I was glad that the beds at the Royal Biblia Academy were so big.

“Okay, come here!”

“I will not!!”

The bright red Lilith threw the hat she was wearing at me.

PLOP.

“Uff.”

It gently hit my face.

“Good grief...”

Lilith then sat down on the ground, hugged a cushion to her chest and frowned.

“Mm, next time it would be better if we invite Lilith-sensei, too?”

“I am not angry about that, Yui-san!”

“...So complicated.”

The other two girls were made to kneel formally in front of Lilith. Such a spectacle happened relatively often, so you could call it an “usual thing”.

“Calm down, Lilith. They actually helped me.”

“Helped... you?”

When I declared so from atop my bed, Lilith tilted her head perplexed.

“Onii-san was groaning in his sleep when Arin-chan and I crawled into his bed. He was even sweating really bad...”

“I felt a wicked surge of magical power. So we gave him our power as to ease that magical power even for a bit.”

“Is that so...”

Lilith totally believed them. Even I knew that just holding hand would have sufficed to convey magical power.

“Thanks, girls. I was having a something like a nightmare, so you really helped me.”

“No problem. Yui will do anything for Onii-san!”

“I am your wife after all, my husband.”

Both of them said openly. Arin and Yui were giving me a straightforward affection, so I was rather pleased.

“....Mh? But you would not know that Arata was groaning in his sleep unless you snuck into his room, right?”

“We got busted.”

“We can no longer avoid telling her that we came to sneak into his bed.”

“Yui-san, Arin-san!”

The two of them were scolded in the end.

...However, I recalled that I was having a nightmare rather often lately.

Was it related to the fact that I was a “candidate for the devil lord”?

I was gradually getting closer to become a “devil lord”, an existence dangerous to the world...

If that was the reason for my nightmares, they would become reality at some point?

“Oh my, what a serious face.”

A voiced called out to me from straight above.

“Mh? That voice.”

I looked up and... there was no one.

“Huh? I was sure that was Levi-san’s voice just now...”

The girls were looking around the room and ceiling, too.

At that moment.

“Fufufu, I’m here!”

RUSTLE! The blanket on the other bed in the room whirled up.

“Scoop: Pyjama Party!”

On top of that bed sat the girl with a ponytail that had called out to me earlier, Kazama Levi and a girl with blonde twintails that was snapping photos with the camera in her hand, Selina Sherlock.

By the way, Levi wore a Japanese fashion nightwear, whereas Selina wore a western pyjama.

“When did you get there!”

“I’m a ninja after all. I specialize in infiltration and deception.”

That wasn’t answering the question, but her voice certainly had come from above earlier. Yet, she had actually been in the bed...

“Ninjas sure are awesome.”

“Indeed.”

When I praised her honestly, she proudly puffed up her chest.

“Fuah, it was quite tiring to keep hiding in this bed ever since we snuck into the room together with the others.”

Selina kindly spilled the beans for us.

“You came into this room at night, too, Levi-san, Selina-san?”

“Yes, Lilith-sensei. And it’s the truth that Arata-san was groaning in his sleep with an unsettled magical power. It’s quite worrying...”

“Y- Yes... That’s... right...”

Then her ninja distraction started. Lilith’s mind was skilfully taken off the fact that girls had came to a boy’s room in their nightwear.

“It certainly happens that you are warned in form of a dream when your own magical power is out of control or affected by something...”

"Is that so? Actually, does anyone of you experienced that, too?"

When I asked, all the girls smiled quietly.

"Studying 'magic' means that you forcibly research, adopt, imagine and accept a factor that does not exist within you as a 'thema' in a repetitive manner to comprehend it."

Lilith's tone was gentle, but her eyes seemed to look at something distant.

"Mm, a factor that does not exist within myself, huh..."

My thema was "Impero". Was that the factor that didn't exist within myself? I certainly hadn't the slightest intention to control someone. Personally, I was more happy when everyone could do what they wanted, lived their lives as they wanted and went through life honest to themselves.

But while I spent my time as a mage, I realized that this wasn't enough.

The "breakdown phenomenon" that unreasonably might rob me of all my precious things. The various cases caused by mages. To do something about all that, I figured that I should just control the whole world.

However, I had no clue how to actually do that.

Therefore it was the perfect thema for me, I guess?

"I recently had a nightmare as well, so I came to seek some warmth from my husband."

Arin raised her hand and said that.

"Wait, are you alright, Arin?"

"I am stable for now, my husband. I've Yui help me to calm it down, too."

Arin looked at Yui, whereupon Yui smiled triumphant.

"I'm an expert for dreams after all! Onii-san's suffering immediately ended thanks to my breasts, right?"

"Indeed. Breasts sure are awesome."

"Ehehe♪ "

"S- Such a treatment will not do!"

Lilith said flustered with a red face, but it was a fact that I was saved from that lonely and sinister space by Yui's breasts.

"Thank you, Yui, Arin."

"Sure... As long as it's for you..."

"I am your wife after all..."

It made me happy just seeing them blush.

Now then, I was rather concerned about Arin having a nightmare. But would she tell me about her dream, her pain so easily?

"What do you say about telling Arata-san about our own experiences, Lilith-sensei?"

Levi raised her hand and proposed helpful.

"Mm... It certainly will be troublesome if he goes to sleep without knowing how to deal with the unsettled magical power when we leave now."

Lilith placed her hand against her chin and became absorbed in thought.

“Then it will be an extracurricular lesson.”

“Yay~ It’s a pyjama party~♪ “

“No! This is a serious matter regarding Arata and Arin-san’s nightmares...”

“Actually, I, Selina Sherlock, have anticipated this and prepared a bunch of snacks and drinks!”

Selina pointed at the bed, where indeed a mountain of snacks and juices laid.

“Aww, geez...”

“Hahaha, well, let’s take it easy.”

Levi slapped the downhearted Lilith on the shoulder.

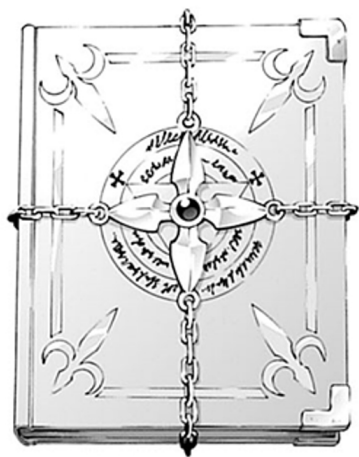
Well, I was grateful how it would be more of an easy-going study group rather than a formal lesson.

“So, Arin, what kind of nightmare did you have?”

“Mm... I recently obtained the “spear”, so it’s due to that.”

Arin looked at the ring around the ring finger of her left hand and closed her eyes.

“...It was around the time when my husband was assigned as an inspector.”



03

ブレイクアップ・ガール ランス・オブ・クリエイト
崩壊少女と創造の槍

Chapter 02: Break-up Girl & Lance of Create

I had nothing.

My first memory was darkness.

Only darkness, nothing else.

But, suddenly I noticed — that “I” existed within that darkness.

That was my first memory.

I didn’t know why I was in the darkness, nor where exactly I was.

But I was aware that “I” was there.

I realized that I existed.

In the moment I recognized that —

The view in front of me split.

There was an endless blue sky and a green plain.

Why was I here?

What was going on?

To begin with, who was I?

With no answers to these questions, I took one step ahead. At that moment.

I felt the grass under my feet.

The wind grazed my cheeks.

My nose was tickled by the air.

All these kind of things.

Everything in the world affected me.

“Ah...”

For some reason, I cried.

* * *

“That’s the dream of my first memory, which I started to see again lately. And while I wandered around in an unknown place, I met the headmaster.”

When I told them that, everyone looked a bit surprised.

My husband was surprised, too, but showed not the slightest sign of “pity” or “wariness”.

His expression simply revealed an “Oho”.

It was said that he is my other half, but I didn’t really understand it.

Still...

“Mh? What’s up, Arin?”

“Nothing. I was just looking at your face.”

He looked at me and called out to me concerned.

Just from that, my heart beat faster and my cheeks turned hot.

This surely was the pounding of a wife-to-be.

“I wonder if Arin-san, too, came from something like a different world like me...”

Lilith-sensei placed her hand against her chin and muttered in her usual musing pose.

Apparently Lilith-sensei was born in a different world and thrown into this world.

Her original world was destroyed by her father, the “Demon Lord” of their world, so in a sense, the darkness I had seen might have been the end of a world, too.

“Come to think of it, the headmaster suddenly appeared in front of me and told me to that he came to pick me up.”

“He has always been a suspicious man, but that sounds extremely dangerous.”

Everyone nodded with “Yeah, yeah” to the words of Lilith-sensei.

Back then, I had been around the age of eight.

It might have been dangerous in various ways.

“Incidentally, it has been a few years since then, but the headmaster has not changed at all.”

“Now that you mention it, he certainly hasn’t. Well, an immortal spell apparently is a must when you become a high-ranked mage.”

Levi said.

A mage is but half a mage if immortality didn’t come natural to him.

I got the feeling that I heard that from somewhere.

“Reminds me, the headmaster of Liber Academy was a little girl.”

Hearing my husband recalling that, I felt that it might be necessary for a female mage to learn a rejuvenation spell, too.

Seemed like I still had a lot to learn.

“And then the headmaster brought you here?”

Selina leaned forward while taking out a notepad.

That strong curiosity of hers was important for a mage as well, so we, the Trinity Seven, acknowledged her superiority as we should follow her example.

“Yes. On our way, weird monsters often attacked us, though.”

“Weird monsters?”

“I think I know something about that.”

Yui clapped her hands once.

“It seems unknown monsters that can’t be analyzed sometimes show up outside the academy.”

“That is because I leave the Academy grounds.”

“EHH?”

Yui was surprised, so I wanted to explain it for a bit.

“It appears that monsters no one has ever seen before appear instead of the already identified ones when I leave the grounds. Some of them were easily defeated, but against some others we could only flee.”

“Eh? By we, you mean the headmaster?”

Selina’s face turned pale.

“Yes. He told me: ‘No good, we’ve to run’.”

“M- Monsters on a level that not even the headmaster, a ‘Paladin’, could win against!”

Levi listened quietly next to the surprised Selina. Sometimes, she would secretly made a keen look in a way that no one noticed. Well, I noticed it now, though. It seemed that she didn’t want it to be known, so I didn’t say anything in particular about it.

“Must be an ‘Another One’.”

As always, I was surprised by her omniscience.

She naturally knew things no one of us knew.

I didn’t know whether that knowledge dated back to her live in the “shadow of the world” up to now or if she was just brilliant at researching.

“Yes, Levi is right. As expected of a ninja.”

“Fufu, ninjas are always well-informed.”

She joked around proudly, but I, too, had only come to know about “Another One” just recently.

If she ever were to become an enemy to my husband.

An indescribable worry befell me when such a thought crossed my mind.

“What’s that ‘Another One’? A big fan of you, Arin?”

“Something similar. But it will not appear around me anymore, so rest assured, my husband.”

“Oh, really. I’m glad you aren’t targeted.”

My heart once again filled with warmth when my husband said so, relieved from the bottom of his heart.

“Why is that?”

Lilith-sensei asked and I showed her my ring.

The grimoire “Ragna Yggdrasil”.

My very own grimoire that was sealed within this ring.

“Because I headed to that place to get my spear.”

“That place...?”

“Yes. Into the world inside ‘Ragna Yggdrasil’, the grimoire I had ever since I came to this world. Into the ‘World Tree Library’.”

I began to tell.

About the time when I faced myself and gained that spear.

* * *

It was during the time when my husband was assigned as an inspector and headed to the Royal Liber Academy.

I researched the grimoire in my own room from morning till night, not even sparing a minute for sleep.

My husband was gradually powering up.

But his increase in power meant that he gradually got closer to becoming the Devil Lord.

At some point, he might get devoured by the power of the Devil Lord within him.

I always mused if there was something I could do to prevent that from happening or help him when it happens.

The conclusion I reached was to return to the starting point.

In other words: “Who am I?”

—A lot was still unknown about my grimoire “Ragna Yggdrasil”.

This might come natural to a mage with a lot of grimoires, but it was safe to say that a mage spent his life to decipher grimoires.

Awakening to magic, increasing your magical power by researching it and then obtaining a grimoire about your research thema. Once you obtained that grimoire, you would be called a “mage” for the first time and you could go into “Magus Mode” by releasing the power of the grimoire.

In other words, Selina was strictly speaking a mage apprentice as she didn’t own a grimoire, whereas my husband and I first learned the handling of the grimoire as we owned one from the very beginning.

Therefore I decided to return to the basics for now.

First off all, scrutinizing the grimoire, which had been a given for me.

And then, denying the sorcery written in there.

—The path to magic was a path of denial.

Denying what I perceived as common knowledge and pursuing what I lacked within myself.

In my case, that was “Ira”.

I was disinterested in emotions to begin with, but I couldn’t even imagine myself surrendering to anger. Nothing within me even came close to anger, so I had absolutely no clues. That was the start of it.

From then on, I research little by little at which times emotions were called into action and during trial and errors about what anger was, I recognized that I lacked the “impulse to destroy” the most of all.

In other words, “Ruina”.

An emotion to destroy just about everything.

Bringing about destruction in a fury beyond your control.

To me— that was something even more incomprehensible than the truth of this world. Why would anyone do that? Was there a necessity to do so? What was the point of doing that... I didn’t understand it at all.

For that reason, it became my thema.

And through persistent research, I became a “Trinity Seven”.

“That is why I need to try a different approach.”

I focused on the ring around the ring finger of my left hand.

My own grimoire, “Ragna Yggdrasil”.

Usually I would release its magical power and let it change into its grimoire shape.

But I used my own magical power —

“Connecting to the ‘Ira’ archive. Executing thema.”

Without going into Magus Mode.

And I poured “ruina” magical power into the ring.

GLEEEAM!

“!”

The ring gleamed in a blue light and an intense pain ran through my whole body.

The grimoire and its owner were basically one in body and soul.

It was a matter of course that even my own body would break when I poured “ruina” magical power into the grimoire.

But if this was a grimoire to destroy something, then what kind of macro was effective to destroy my own body?

I had wanted to confirm that, but —

“Kuh...”

The all too violent stream of power attacked me in form of a pain so intense that all my nerves burned. Just like forcefully pushing a hot needle through my blood vessels. Just like cutting my skin from inside with a sharp blade again and again. Just like hitting my head with a thick iron chunk. “Ruina” concepts of all kinds took shape as pains and raged inside of me.

I wasn't such an excellent mage yet that I could keep my consciousness after receiving that pain all at once...

—When I woke up, my vision was filled with an unfamiliar scenery.

A giant tree. Most likely I was inside a cavity of the tree that was so big that the academy would fit into it numerous times.

The wooden walls were bookshelves and hosted an endless number of books.

"This is..."

"Welcome to the 'World Tree Library', mage."

When I turned around to the muttered voice of a woman, there stood a knight clad in a dark green armour from head to toe. The armour was stylish and looked like it prioritized mobility over defence.

And in her hands was— a strangely shaped spear, whose tip was curved in a spiral.

"The 'World Tree Library' ... I thought it was supposed to have vanished in the Ragnarok. It's one of the divine places that stores all knowledge about the runes."

"Exactly. As expected of a mage, who made it here. You're quick on the uptake. I'm amazed you were willing to destroy your own world of magical power to connect with the truth."

"I have to attain power so bad that I would go so far. That is all."

Declaring so, I held out my left hand to her.

The spear she was holding was most likely the “magic spear Gáe Bolg”.

A magical weapon that was considered to enhance rune magic. As I was using Chaotic Runes, it meant that their power would skyrocket if I were to get my hands on it.

“Are you Scáthach, the progenitor of Chaotic Runes?”

“No. I’m afraid I’m more of a left-over phenomenon. As I’m an alter ego bound to this place, I’ve no idea whether the real her is still alive or dead. I wonder where the real Scáthach is and what she’s doing right now.”

It looked rather comical how she shrugged her shoulders clanging.

However, the threatening aura around her didn’t diminish at all.

If she was an alter ego left behind by the progenitor...then she should be even more dangerous than a high-level monster.

“Then tell me, mage. As you pursue power now, what do you desire that you’re ready to bring destruction onto yourself, coming here to the ‘World Tree Library’, the origin of your grimoire?”

My desire.

I wanted power so bad that I endured such pains without even considering the risk that I might lose my grimoire.

“...At first, I had no clue what it meant to be his wife.”

“Mm, the Devil Lord candidate?”

“Yes. So I kept my eyes open and observed a lot, but I still did not find an answer. Instead, I only learned all kind of things about him.”

For example, how he was easygoing all the time. How he smiled right away at anyone he spoke with. How he prioritized others over him, even if it pained and hurt him. How his troubled face was kind of cute. How surprisingly manly his side profile looked when he was serious. How he emitted an aura that seemed to say that everything would turn out alright with guts and improvisation, no matter how dire the situation.

There was no end to the list.

“Now I want to help him, so that he does not need to fight too much.”

“I see. You seek power for love. Most of such mages were somewhat twisted. But your love still seems to be pure.”

“If I had an emotion that turns me twisted, I surely would not have become the Trinity Seven of Ira.”

“Indeed. You’re so sparse on emotions, yet you love the Devil Lord candidate so dearly — I kind of want to see him for myself now. Via this spear, that is.”

Scáthach’s alter ego took a stance with the spear.

Yes, if I was after power, then I had to make my point and prove my intention and resolve.

That was an iron rule in sorcery.

“Then I will allow myself to take that spear... Connecting to the ‘Ira’ archive —”

“I can’t hand it over just like that. Connecting to the ‘Ira’ archive —”

At the same time my ring took the shape of a grimoire, her spear gleamed in a pale light.

We both used magical power from the same archive.

Thus our battle would be determined by our knowledge of it.

""Executing thema!""

Our voices overlapped and two magical circle with a rune formed respectively at our feet.

Our magic activated nearly at the same time. In a fight between two Chaotic Rune mages, the outcome was mainly defined by the affinity to the macro.

However, as a Trinity Seven, I was already well-versed with the "Ira" archive and possessed a grimoire ever since I could think, so I could come out on top with magical power even on sparse affinity.

Therefore—

""Tiwaz'!"

The "Tiwaz" rune glowed in the middle of my magic circle at my feet.

The rune stabilized the utilization of magical power and enhanced the effect of a spell.

So far, I had been indifferent to nearly everything. Even when my husband appeared and I took an interest in him, I still didn't feel the desire to "definitely make him mine".

He should just keep smiling in his own way. And I simply wanted to be by his side.

Apparently I lacked the desire to “triumph”. The desire to accomplish something by going as far as destroying something. The desire to win, even if someone else lost. An obsession over such a triumph.

Since that concept was currently the complete opposite of me, I wanted to research that thema next.

“I, too, have the ‘Tiwaz’ rune.”

“—”

The same rune as mine was drawn at her feet.

It was quite likely that we would cancel each other out with the same spell. So I immediately put up the index finger of my right hand and wrote a different rune into the air.

“‘Kano’!”

A crimson flame broke forth from the rune I had written and enveloped Scátach’s alter ego.

However, in the next moment— The same kind of flame swept over mine and erased it.

She had used the “Kano” rune at the same time.

It could still be passed off as a coincidence for the first “Tiwaz”, but she used the same rune as me twice in a row... I couldn’t help but feel doubtful. I came up with a hypothesis at once.

That she was using the same runes as me at the same time.

I didn’t know what kind of magic that was. But if I didn’t defeat her quickly... my magical power would soon run out when we kept

cancelling out each other. Then I surely wouldn't be able to win against her, the master of this world, anymore.

"In that case."

Lately, my husband was studying with all his might. So I, too, had secretly researched and trained as to remain by his side. I might be able to surprise her because I pull it off without a rehearsal.

I changed the rune at my feet. It lowered the effect of my magic, but it wasn't necessary for the magic I was about to use.

""Uruz'!"

In the moment the rune at my feet changed, an immense amount of magical power gushed forth from my body. The original rune had been "Ur". That rune excessively used my own energy for an overkill. My "Uruz" rune added a specification to the "Ur" rune. By using it, my magical power equalled Yui's cardinal class magical power for a short time. Though there was a risk that my body would degrade into a simple monster if my magical power were to run out before the fight was over.

"A remodelled rune that puts your own existence at stake... I see."

She raised an impressed voice from under her armour. But I wasn't done yet.

""Fehu'!"

Again, I wrote into the air with the index finger of my left hand. It was a remodelled rune with the original meaning of "livestock".

""Eihwaz'!"

At the same time, I drew a remodelled “world tree” with the index finger of my right hand.

Thus the rune at my left hand turned into an arrow of light and the rune at my right hand into a bow.

The quintessence of sorcery was the Trinity. In other words, if I managed to combine three spells, their powers wouldn't be added together, but multiplied. The rune at my feet enhanced my magical power, which I used to create an arrow by means of Fehu, shooting it with the bow that represents death and rebirth. If this succeeded, it could even defeat a high-class monster.

However,

“!?”

She was an alter ego of “Scáthach”, the progenitor of the Chaotic Runes.

“Yeah, you need to pull of at least this much to qualify for coming to this library.”

My eyes beheld how she took a stance with a bow, showing exactly the same runes at both hands and exactly the same magical circle at the feet like me.

The progenitor was an existence that already surpassed “at least this much”.

“Ah...”

I realized that the momentary hesitation, the opening I showed was fatal.

“This seems to be the end for you— Now return to your world... ‘Othala’.”

The moment she spoke, the rune “Othala” glowed over my head.

It was a spell to return the target to its “homeland”.

However, I saw beyond the radiance of the rune... at the empty darkness.

Then I realized. I wouldn’t return to the warm place with my husband and the others from the academy. Not to world, where I spent such fun times.

Instead, I would return to a dark, lonely world, where nothing existed but darkness and solitude.

“‘Othala’!”

I quickly abandoned my trinity runes and used the same rune as her to cancel it out. But... The homeland of Sáthrach’s alter ego was this “World Tree Library”, which her real self, the progenitor, had created for her. In other words, my spell would “return her to the current location” and thus it didn’t activate.

I could no longer get rid of her.

And I would return to the darkness, never setting foot into that place again.

That was the outcome of this magic battle.

“...My husband...”

I drew the “Othala” rune once more with my finger, but this time for myself, not to cancel it out. The silhouette of my husband overlapped with the radiance of the rune.

Why wasn't my world... my real homeland the same world as his?

Before I noticed it, tears were spilling from my eyes. I wanted to see him once more, I wanted to touch him once more, I wanted him to touch me once more, so I couldn't stop the tears.



And it wasn't just my husband. At some point, all of the Trinity Seven, Selina and the grimoires had gathered around my husband with a smile.

To me, that really was like a miracle.

Something irreplaceable...

A precious thing I didn't want to break.

"I want to... stay with my husband... and the others."

My voice was trembling and cracked, hardly anything coherent.

However. Suddenly a different rune floated in front of me. The rune had appeared without me writing it with my fingers or using the magic circle. It was...

"... 'Ansuz' ...?"

That rune automatically glowed and then— another rune, resembling the "Eolh" one, appeared over it.

I intuitively understood that it signified "amicitia".

"What a surprise. You are originally close to 'nothingness', yet you bring forth letters of the heart to such an extent."

Scáthatch's alter ego said surprised.

Yes, I hadn't acquired these runes yet. They shouldn't exist within me.

However, right now — these two words appeared in front of me, fused with the "Othala" I had written and emitted a new radiance.

“While you’re an existence without a human heart, you hold a humanly desire and spoke it out. Accordingly, I as well as God Odin, the master of the runes, shall answer your volition—”

So far it had been an “Othala” rune.

But now it changed into “something” different.

“This is the last rune, which wasn’t born in the world doomed to be destroyed by Ragnarok, and— your new thema ‘partum’.”

“‘Partum’...”

When I spoke out that word, a magic circle drawing the rune appeared at my feet.

It was a different one from the “ruina” magic circle I always used.

A new magical power swelled up from its radiance and filled me. It was hot and pleasant.

It felt like I was embraced by my husband.

“You’ve passed the trial. You smashed your self and gained a new thema. And this spear shall be the cornerstone for your new thema. ‘Partum Arm: Magic Spear Gae Bolg’. This spear is yours, tying yourself to the homeland you desired.”

Scáthach’s alter ego was gradually enveloped by light. That light settled entirely into the spear.

The spear hosted the “partum” thema I had brought forth and floated brimmed with magical power.

“Thank you, Ms. alter ego. ...Now I can return to...”

The moment I grabbed the hilt of the spear, a bright radiance wrapped up the whole library and at the same time—

A single tear fell from my eyes again.

* * *

“That is how I obtained the Gae Bolg, my husband.”

“...You were doing something that dangerous all by yourself...”

I thought he would be surprised, but instead he showed a worried expression.

For some reason, I was very happy about that, so I unconsciously snuggled up to my husband.

“Now then, my husband, let us make a baby to research my new thema.”

Then I tightly embraced him.

“O- Oh...? S- Something like that applies to the thema, too?”

“Making a baby is a form of creation.”

“It does not!!”

As expected, Lilith-sensei interrupted us from the side. Her face was bright red up to her ears and her bashfulness was utterly adorable.

“...How complicated.”

I muttered my usual catchphrase.

Then...

“Oh, Arin, you naturally can smile all cutely now?”

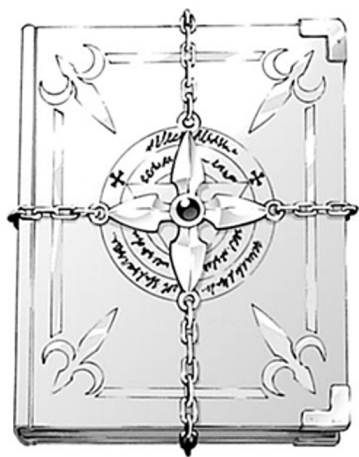
My husband peeked at my face and said happily.

The smiling face of my beloved husband.

Likewise, the smiling faces of everyone else as they warmly watched over us.

My homeland was no longer that darkness. The place where I belonged was here.

Along with that strong sentiment, I realized that I could smile from happiness now.



04

アウトロウ・プロセクター エウデーモニクス
魔道検閲官と幸福論

Chapter 03: Outlaw Prosecutor & Eudaemonics

KNOCK, KNOCK

It was already in the middle of the night, yet bustling voices and light spilled out from that room. As the leading inspector, as the righteous Yamana Mira, I had to confirm what was going on there.

“Oh, Mira. What brings you here so late at night?”

The one opening the door with a clattering was... the supposed target of my hate: an impure boy.

“I- I simply came to see if you were doing anything impure with the girls.”

When I looked at his face, my face got hot for some reason. However, I managed to keep a steadfast attitude through determination.

“The boss wants to join the pyjama party, too, Niichan.”

“A- Akio!”

Akio had accompanied me and said something absolutely unnecessary.

I could not deny the fact, though, that I, too, had admired an assembly at night to chat.

But it wasn't like I came here with these intentions...

“Oh, really? Sure, just keep an eye on us then.”

Somewhere deep down, I was a bit happy to be allowed to keep an eye on them so readily.

“Niichan, you do pervy stuff even when we keep an eye on you anyway.”

“Most of the time it’s just an accident and not initiated by myself.”

“But you’re pleased about it, right?”

“Quite so!”

“Hey, you two!”

When I rebuked Akio and Arata-san, Lilith-sensei smiled to herself inside the room. She seemed to be relieved that she was no longer the only person giving scoldings... or retorts.

“W- Well then, excuse my intruding.”

“Sure, come in.”

My heart skipped half a beat when Arata-san invited me into his room so natural. He usually spent his free time in here... Just from thinking about that, I got somewhat fuzzy inside.

“Yahoo, Arata-kun!”

At that very moment.

The digital digits 0 and 1 suddenly spun directly over his head.

“Uwah”

Liese appeared in an revealing nightgown through a phase transition and pushed Arata-san down on the bed.

““Wha!””

Lilith-sensei’s voice and mine overlapped.

“I came for a night visit♪”

Liese straddled him on top of the bed and showed a lovely smile.

“You must not, Arata! Not in front of everyone!”

“So it’s alright as long as no one watches, Lilith-sensei?”

“That is not what I meant, Liese-san!”

“Yay, Yui’s gonna hug Onii-san, too!”

“I have to defend my standing as the legal wife.”

And then, Yui-san and Arin-san took the opportunity to get on the bed as well.

I became dumbfounded as I saw their smooth performance.

“Boss, this is your chance, join them.”

“I- I will not!!”

My voice was no longer composed towards Akio’s incitement.

“Mira-san, come here.”

Levi-san beckoned me over to the other bed with her hand.

“Yes?”

I said down on the other bed without any suspicious when Levi-san had called me.

Then she suddenly clung to me!

“Eh, Eh, Ehh!?”

“Ninja Arts: Body swap!”

Levi-san declared with a loud voice. In that moment.

Arata-san’s face appeared in front of me.

“Hyah!?”

“Oh?”

I could feel the entirety of his big body and his body warmth at the all too close distance.

All my blood shot into my head.

“KYAA!!”

SLAAP!!

I unconsciously slapped his cheek with my palm with all my strength.

“As you can see, I suffer after a treat even without doing anything.”

“....That, well, I am sorry.”

I certainly had been... rather unjust to Arata-san just now.

Though, if anything, I would like to see a woman, who wouldn't have resisted in such a situation. That said, I cannot blame him for that reason, either.

“Well, you girls were all soft, so we're even.”

“Geez... so impure...”

When I pouted, Arata-san smirked like a prankish boy.

I wasn't particular against being touched, but I couldn't endure all that embarrassment.

Ah, no, I'm against being touched. What's wrong with me? I might not have recovered from the confusion yet.

“Anyway, Boss sure has opened up to him”

“The inspectors sure have gone lenient while I was gone.”

Akio and Liese were eating snacks while chatting nonchalant. I had realized myself that I was being less strung up, but I got the feeling that these two were taking it easier a lot more often, too.

Assuming that all of this was due to Arata-san as well...

“Reminds me, you three were originally appointed as inspectors, right?”

“Yes. Though, now it is just us two, since Liese disappeared in the middle of it.”

I looked a bit glaring at Liese, whereat she lowered her head smiling. She really wasn't reflecting on what she did. Well, judging a mage by normal ethics was impossible, so whatever.

“Oh, you're interested in the work of an inspector, Niichan?”

“Rather than the job itself, I'm just curious about you girls.”

“Eh...”

My heart unintentionally skipped a beat when he phrased it like that.

I was convinced that his interest was about “what we were doing”, but I couldn't control my heart well.

“Can you tell me some stuff you're allowed to speak of?”

When he requested that, I couldn't bring myself to turn him down.

I got the feeling that I understand now how Lilith-sensei can't turn down anything related to studying.

“Let’s see... Then let me tell you about one terrible incident in a certain city.”

I hoped that talking about this would ease my nervousness.

...Or maybe, I just want him to know about what I had done.

I might just be deluding myself, though.

* * *

My job as part of the Grimoire Security is extremely harsh and often beyond helping. Our three-man team solved various incident, be it large or small, ever since its founding, but all of them were tragic ones.

This story is about one of these incidents.

The average rural city we were dispatched to was located in the central area of America.

We had to drive a few hours with the car prepared by the academy after getting out of the teleportation device.

It already made us doubt if this city was marooned.

—The magical power of a “breakdown phenomenon” had been witnessed in this city. Or so the report said.

That alone would be insufficient to get us inspectors to act, but the contact to the three mages, who had headed there to investigate, had broken off and they hadn’t returned.

As all three had disappeared at the same time without any contact, the situation was deemed extremely dangerous and thus, we inspectors made an appearance.

Anyway.

On a first glance, the city looked calm and quiet.

“Somehow this city gives me the creeps even though it looks so tranquil.”

Liese muttered with a snort.

A tranquil atmosphere certainly hung over the city. Here and there diligent working people went forth and back, children ran around happily, a housewife carried a shopping bag on her way home and an old lady walked her dog.

Yet... why did it feel so lonely?

I shared Liese's sentiment of “giving me the creeps”.

“.....”

Akio was making a grim face, when I suddenly looked at her.

“What is the matter, Akio?”

“Ah, well, the atmosphere resembled my hometown, so I just...”

If my memory proved me right, her hometown had been destroyed.

No matter how often she had prayed to God, no matter how devout she had acted, a tragedy had befallen her city one day without warning and wiped it off the map. Akio had lost her mother, whom she had lived with until then, the other townspeople and just about everything in an instant. Her “faith” seemed to have been completely destroyed with it, too.

For that very reason, her thema was “Fides”.

She had firmly believed that God or Fate would save her no matter what happens.

“Well, that aside, let’s go check-in at the hotel. I’m tired from the drive.”

“You slept the whole time, Akio.”

“I want to sleep properly in a bed.”

“Aha, I know, right!”

The two of them were conversing like that, so I made a sigh.

“Please be more wary, you two. We have to start with our investigation right away.”

Then I rebuked them.

“We are meeting in the lobby one hour after checking in. Take a break until then.”

“Roger!”

“That’s my boss. So understanding.”

I made another small sigh towards the rejoicing two.

To be honest, something... felt off in this city. And in fact, I, too, felt somewhat exhausted from my daily duties as an inspector, so I wanted to take a small break as well.

We checked in at a relatively big hotel in the city and started our investigation one hour later. The city wasn’t all that big, but it still had a few locations suitable for shady institutions or rituals.

It was quite likely that a mage conducted impure magic experiences at desolate places. In that case, the fastest way to solve this would be to find the “workshop” of that person.

“I will search the right part of the city while Akio searches the left part. As for the outskirts...”

“I’ll make my rounds there.”

Before I could finish my sentence, Liese teleported.

Her thema was “Stagna”.

In other words, she essentially had a personality that was unable of the notion to pause.

Her little sister, Selina-san, had the thema “Ligare”.

She was a curious soul, zealous about studying and loved to spread news like the press, so she likewise lacked the notion to restrain.

The thing furthest away from oneself— The completely opposite of one’s soul. Values at the exact opposite of one’s own. That was a magic thema.

Same for my “Justitia”. I knew very well that it originally was the furthest away from me.

“Boss, want to switch our areas?”

“Huh? Why?”

“Aw, well... You know, there’s a church in your area. I want to take a look at it.”

Thema-wise, Akio was certainly more suited to investigate it. Then the search area should...

Once my thoughts made it that far, I realized how vast and full of troublesome places my own area actually was.

“...Akio.”

“Ah, well, ehm...”

Apparently she had been concerned for me as I was tired from my prolonged duties.

I had allotted it like that because I was better at analysing and investigating, though...

“Indeed. Then please take care of it, including the church.”

“Mm, good.”

While thanking her for the true concern behind her suggestion in my mind, I declared without relaxing my dauntless attitude. I was genuine happy about her kindness, but in my position as the keen leading inspector, I couldn't allow myself to rejoice openly.

“Well then, see you later, Boss.”

I glanced at her how she left with a smile and a short wave of her hand.

Then I muttered “Thank you, Senpai”.

“Found nothing! It was peace itself! All the townspeople were kind.”

“Same here. If anything, I was greeted openhearted. It's rare to find an isolated, rural town, where they treat outsiders so kindly.”

“I could not find any traces of magical power, either.”

Around the time, when the sun started to go down. We three tried sharing our results from the investigation, but we hadn't gotten anything.

I had hoped to find at least a clue about the disappearing of the three mages, but no one knew anything, even when we inquired about it. The mages seemed to have stayed at this hotel, but the staff hadn't seen them again after their first night here.

In other words, the priority dispatched mages already went missing on their first day here.

In that case, we, too, will...

"Let's call it a day for today."

When I suggested that, Liese widened her eyes.

"Already?"

Personally, she might have wanted to move around and investigate a bit more.

"Yes. We moved around a lot today. If there is a mage here, who caused the breakdown phenomenon this time, then I believe that he will attempt something tonight."

"Mhm, that means, you assume that someone plotted this breakdown phenomenon, Boss?"

"Yes. If it had occurred naturally, there would be remains or traces of magical power without fail, because there is no one around to suppress them. However, we could not find such traces, no matter how hard we searched. In short..."

“So either someone’s doing a breakdown phenomenon in secret or erasing its natural occurrence. Moreover, that someone has a power that not even Mira-senpai can perceive.”

Liese was all motivated all of a sudden.

She had a tendency to be too rash in her research. If there was another mage here, she must be hoping to get to know even just a bit about his research.

“Thus, we will wait until night. Be sure to rest well until then.”

“Roger.” “Okay.”

On my instructions, the two of them gave a firm reply.

Then night came.

CLACK. With that sound, the clockhand turned to midnight. At that moment—

The sound of the clock, ticking every second so far, vanished.

“Oho... Time-controlled, eh?”

As a numerologist, Liese’s research mainly dealt with time and space and she muttered on top of her bed. Of course, neither Akio, nor I were sleeping, too, and had been all prepared on top of our beds.

...When I pricked up my ears, I could hear various people gathering outside. There were sounds of doors opening, so the people staying at the hotel might have come out into the hallway.

“Mm...”

“What is the matter, Akio?”

“Boss, this breakdown phenomenon belongs to my archive. I can clearly sense its ‘Gula’ magical power.”

Akio said somewhat apologetic with a frown. It wasn’t like she was at fault for it just because it was a Gula breakdown phenomenon, but she must feel frustrated about not noticing it during the investigation earlier.

“Geh. That’s not good for me.”

“Well, yeah, if they’re capable.”

“Not like they’re multiple Akios, but it’s still unpleasant!”

A mage like Akio, who strengthened her own body, had an advance against a mage like Liese, who specialized in techniques such as teleportation to have somebody at her beck and call. In other words, Liese would’ve a hard time if the opponent attacked with something similar this time.

“Here they come.”

At the same time Liese muttered that, the door opened with a clatter—

Three staff members jostled in the narrow hallway and rushed inside all at once.

Their faces were even more pale than during the day and their eyes had turned to their white, hardly appearing anything like sane. The very picture of going crazy with an inherent increase of strength.

“Tally ho!” “Sheesh.”

Still, there was no way they could prevail against Akio’s martial arts and Liese’s skills.

Akio punched two of them with her fists and Liese kicked one into the face.

The bodies of the three were blown away like a leaf in the wind and were back in the hallway in no time.

“Uwah, I see now. Seems the magic lifts after midnight. This city is like a twisted version of Cinderella.”

They could see a couple of other staff members or guests in the hallway, where they had blown the three staff members to.

Just like the staffs members just now, the others, too, wandered down the hallway with the same look in their eyes... When they reached our room, they came rushing in like a violent flood.

BAM!

However, these living corpse look-alikes bumped into an invisible wall at the entrance and their bodies bended in an unnatural way.

“In the name of my ‘Justitia’, I will not let allow you to riot any further.”

I took out an orb— my Grimoire “Book of the Mirrored Lands “ and declared that.

“All of the townspeople become like that from the ‘Gula’ magical power, huh... A breakdown phenomenon alright.”

Akio uttered astonished.

“So at midnight a barrier surrounds the city and everyone turns into ‘living corpses’. It’s a bit creepy, but kind of B-grade, so I’m not all that reluctant.”

Liese seemed to have fun. Most likely because it was a development similar to her beloved B movies.

"I for one cannot forgive the fact that they use the townspeople to attack us instead of using their own strength. You two, we are heading to the source of all this."

When I walked towards the entrance, the invisible wall— my barrier moved in accordance, too. The barrier prevented the townspeople from getting closer to us and pushed them away. Pressed against the wall of the hallway, they were immobilized.

We walked down the hallway amidst that safety zone.

What greeted us there was the hellish scene of the mindless staff members and guests wandering around while hurting themselves, even though they had lived normally until a moment ago.

"I guess we better assume that the whole city looks like this."

"Yeah. Although it's already bad enough with just the hotel."

While watching the people charging at us without noticing my barrier and getting smashed, Akio and Liese had a nonchalant chat. But just like they said, this state surely spread over the whole city. In that case...

"On our way outside, I will invoke the analyse magic that I have placed on the city beforehand. Please come with me and guard me. You may harm the townspeople."

"Sure, Boss." "Roger that, Senpai."

Hearing their responses, I lifted the barrier that had protected us so far. In that moment, the townspeople attacked us at once.

However, my two bodyguards were two of the Trinity Seven, said to be the strongest mages in the world. An average citizen had no hope to hold a candle against them, no matter how much he was strengthened.

Akio easily blew away a great number of them at once with her martial arts. Liese knocked them out by teleporting around so quickly that it appeared like they were multiple of her.

Some of the townspeople had their legs or arms bended in a weird way and others even had their necks broken.

And yet, they still trashed around and tried to attack us. We should treat them as puppet that couldn't be stopped from physical wounds.

While the two of them worked hard to protect me, I invoke my macro that I had set up around the city.

It functioned as a radar at the respective locations and pinpointed the place with the strongest concentration of magical power within the city right now.

Gehenna Scope was a magic to collect information. Nothing could escape my analyse.

My orb displayed the information and from it... I could finally identify a spot with abnormal magical power.

The place, where the mastermind was supposedly at--

"Analyse complete. The church in this city is the heart of the phenomenon."

Oddly enough, it was the place Akio had said to check out during the day.

“Mm... During noon it had been just an abandoned building without anything, though...”

“I guess it was set up, so that it would never be found during the day?”

“Apparently. Had I known this before, I would have given a longer break during the day.”

“Ahaha, it’s rare to see you crack a joke, Mira-senpai!”

By the time my analyse ended, I had reached the lobby of the hotel on the ground floor through the stairs while the two of them protected me.

Even more people than before attacked us all at once there, though.

“I kinda got bored of these guys already.”

Liese took her own Grimoire, something like a tablet PC, and summoned a lot of strings with 0s and 1s from it. These swept over the lobby like a whip and sent the people flying in one go.

“Fuh. You do the next AoE attack, Akio.”

“Sure thing.”

The people hit by the black whip of 0s and 1s stopped moving as if they had been paralysed. They most likely were under a magic that slowed down time... robbing the target of its mobility.

Now we could easily pass through the lobby, but as expected... a large crowd advanced on us with hostility outside.

“Can I go wild, Boss?”

“My analyse revealed that they are already dead and without any minds. You may rout them, but please watch your magic consumption.”

“Great!”

Akio gleeful let Sanskrit characters show up on her fists.

Liese and I left the fighting to Akio... and advanced unconcerned, even though people came to attack us.

“Uryaaa!”

BOOOM!!

A large explosion sounded along with Akio’s happy battle shout...

Then no one hindered us from heading to the church anymore.

The church was located in the middle of the city.

As far as I could tell, it looked like a proper building, not abandoned at all.

“No, no, it really was run-down!”

Not like I was doubting Akio, but I couldn’t help but think that I would’ve noticed something if I had investigated this place myself.

Anyway, it seemed that the run-down church from noon was suddenly restored after midnight.

A brilliant light was leaking from the interior, but there was no human presence.

“I do not sense a person inside.”

“Maybe it’s a monster or queer, Mira-senpai?”

“Hmm... Does not seem to be of one these either. It is rather strange.”

I had thought that we would find the mage behind this phenomenon here. However, there was no presence of anyone being inside, even though it was the source of the magical power for sure. Definitely strange.

“Fuh. In short, we’ve to go in for now.”

Akio uttered with a sigh while she stepped into the church, so we followed her. As it was a “Gula” breakdown phenomenon this time — Akio must have her qualms about it.

She was originally a “Spriggan”, the last of her kin.

Sisters entrusted with a treasure to protect by the Gods. I had heard that amongst these, Akio’s family had protected the treasure considered to be the mightiest in the world.

At that point... I still knew nothing about its whereabouts.

When I entered the church in pursue of Akio’s back, there was a single sister in front of the altar in the middle of the building. There definitely hadn’t been any presence of a person, yet there she was, focussing all her intention onto the large cross in front of her with a pose for a devout prayer.

Akio briskly approached her without any caution...

“Hah... Boss, she’s the source for sure.”

Sighing once again, she declared that.

The sister showed no signs of caring about Akio’s approach and continued to pray without even batting an eyelash.

I could somehow tell the outcome from Akio's sigh alone.

"Uwah."

Liese had gone ahead and raised a voice, so I took a peek at the sister's face, too.

...What I saw was the already mummified body of a dead female.

"There's a repetitive magic in place, so that the magic would continue even after she died. So that she would continue to simply pray forever."

Akio told us while shrugging her shoulders disappointed.

And indeed, the mummified corpse kept muttering something.

However, it were no coherent "words".

Like Akio had mentioned, her macro included a preservative treatment for her vocal cords alone, so that the "repetitive" curse by the name of a prayer wouldn't be interrupted even after her death. In other words, she had cast it onto herself, so that the spell would never be interrupted, knowing she would die.

"What drove the mummy sister into going so far?"

For Liese, it must have been unbearable to keep repeating the same thing even in death. Her voice was obviously filled with disgust.

"Yeah. I think... she keeps praying incantation-like keywords like this: 'May the townspeople be happy. May they find happiness for all eternity. May they get along without change'."

—Indeed.

That certainly was the "Gula" sin.

A magic that kept going according to a limitless desire without a care for one's own body.

A prayer for simply devouring to no end while ignoring the will, feelings and original existence of the townspeople.

That was what the mage aka sister wanted.

The people were forced to live happily every day in a world that repeated itself without their knowledge. At midnight, they would revert to their original appearance of already dead ones and in the morning, they returned to their every-day life again.

She had prayed for that. A wish for which she would go as far as to sacrifice her life to keep on praying.

“.....”

As a mage, that might be the right way. However.

My Grimoire finished its analyse and sparkled faintly.

—“Felicitas”—

“I have analyzed her thema as ‘Felicitas’ of the ‘Gula’ archive.”

I looked at Akio.

I did so to see if she wanted to say something, but she quietly shook her head.

So I faced the already dead sister and executed my own “Justitia”.

“...There is no such thing as eternal happiness. Much less is it something an outsider meddles with. Your prayer, your wish and your salvation, I will put an end to all of them here. In the name of my thema... “Justitia”!”



When I lifted my orb, the floating characters radiated whitish.

“Ah... Ah... Ah...!!”

The remains of the sister tried to tell me something. However, I had decided to sever everything by my own will.

I could no longer harbour any hesitation.

“‘White Universe’!!”

I released the gathered magical power from my Grimoire. In that moment.

The sister’s magical power reversed at once—

A white light spread and covered the city entirely.

“.....Ah.....”

The woman, once a sister, perished amidst that light.

I got the feeling that her last utterance was a weeping...

But I shook off that sentiment and dyed everything in white.

—An empty, run-down church remained after everything was over.

No, the whole city was completely run-down.

The city, the people, everything we encountered had been counterfeit. All the townspeople had long been dead. The three mages, who came here before us, too, must have been killed by the crowd... and trapped inside the barrier of the city.

Everything had been like the sister desired.

“Happiness is an extremely abstruse concept. You can attain it by yourself or get it from others.”

A rampant feeling whirled inside me. The sister had wished for a city, where everyone lived in peace with a smile. Her thema was “Felicitia”. In other words— The concept called happiness should have been the most obscure to her.

Maybe she wished for it despite being in such a city already. Or maybe the city itself had long been far away from happiness, impure and plunged into chaos.

There was no way of knowing about it now.

“Happiness is a mindset of the heart. I’m quite happy, even though I’m tired from work now.”

Akio patted my shoulder while saying so.

...The sister’s tears might be weighting heavier on my heart than I thought.

The warmth of Akio’s action soaked into my chest.

“Well, I’m deciding my happiness all by my own, though.”

After Liese said so with a bright tone, she smiled.

“But if anything, she should’ve wished for world peace, not just this tiny city. That way, she would’ve to research for a long time and maybe come to rival us Trinity Seven at some point?”

“Happiness” on a world-scale.

How could one achieve that?

It certainly might be a field one only could get a hold of through long research.

“Fufu”

“Oh, Mira-senpai laughed!”

It looked weird how Liese struck a Guts pose.

“Thank you, Akio, Liese. ...Now then, let us return home. The next assignment will be waiting for us anyhow.”

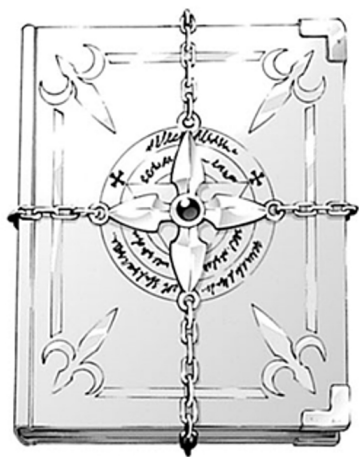
“Ugh, they sure work us hard.”

“I’ll follow you anywhere, Boss.”

Just like that, we left the ruined city.

From the window of the car, I could see the sun starting to raise slowly...

A true next day finally dawned on this city, which had been plunged into an eternal happiness, too.



05

アバシー エクスターミネイト
無期待と完全排除的

Chapter 04: Apathy & Exterminate

Mira finished her story quietly while Akio and Liese nodded reminiscing.

At that point, Levi thought “that reminds me” to herself.

When she had met Yui for the first time, Yui had been an elimination target... In other words, an enemy.

This topic didn't suit this harmonious mood.

Concluding that, Levi thought of a different topic right away.

Like a slightly perverted story involving Lilith.

Or a story about Arin and Mira before Arata had shown up.

And as Selina was making a relieved face, since it were only stories about the Trinity Seven, a story about her blunder would do, too. Such thoughts crossed Levi's mind.

“Mira-san and Akio-san have always been lovey-dovey.”

Levi supplemented their story with that.

But since she had thought of it once, she could no longer push her past to the back of her mind.

It was inevitable.

Mental control didn't mean “to make efforts to forget”, but “to thoroughly face one's memories”.

Levi had lived the harsh life of a ninja, so it was an easy task for her.

She thus joined the conversation with witty remarks on the surface, sometimes getting scolded by the serious members such as Lilith and Mira.

But inwardly she vividly recalled her encounter with Yui.

* * *

“A mage of the cardinal class is being sealed underground, but if possible, could you become her friend?”

It had been a few years ago that the headmaster made such a request of Levi. Of course, Arata hadn’t been at the academy yet, neither had the Trinity Seven been fully assembled at that time.

“Sure, my communication skills are quite formidable.”

Levi was a little bit more callow compared to the present time, as she replied with an apathetic attitude.

Kazama Levi had been acknowledged as the Trinity Seven of “Invidia” long ago.

She was a ninja with a fighting strength that made her one of the five strongest in the world.

The success quotient of missions she took a fancy to, was a hundred percent.

She likewise achieved a hundred percent quotient in assassinating those she didn’t fancy.

Both, back then and in the future, Levi was the bloodiest of the Trinity Seven.

“Well, I leave it up to you how to befriend her.”

The headmaster declared grinning, but the faint nuance of “you may dispose of her if it gets dangerous” seeped through his words. It was one of his cold-hearted expression he would only ever show to Levi. As he was the headmaster of a magic academy, he hardly had the ethic sense of a normal human. For that very reason he was called a “Paladin”, a practitioner of the “magic”, which defied the laws of this world.

And Levi’s existence acted as a deterrent for him.

Her real role was a “mage hunter”.

Her duties mainly involved assassinating the person responsible for an incident instead of solving the incident itself. That applied to masters of magic as well as to the Trinity Seven, her companions. If one of her friends were to be considered dangerous, Levi would be able to end their life without hesitation while acting friendly like before.

That was one part of her personality.

And the dark side of being a ninja.

For that reason, the words “become her friend” from the headmaster also implied the meaning “if she’s dangerous, kill her. For her own good, too”.

“So, how do I get underground?”

“Ah, from the room next to mine.”

“In short, that mage might get mischievous unless you manage the seal yourself?”

“Ahaha, you figured it out so easily. You’re right. A normal seal would burst right away, since she has a cardinal-class magical power.”

“And you’re sending a frail ninja right in the middle of it. So heartless.”

“Oho, it doesn’t feel to all too bad to be called heartless by my cute student.”

Levi kind of respected the headmaster in the way he enjoyed himself no matter what was said, and started to check what she had on hand. Apparently she didn’t need to prepare anything in particular, since she kept herself ready for a mission at any time.

“I’ve my basic ninja equipment on me, so I’ll act at once.”

“Okay, have fun~ I hope you come back in one piece.”

The headmaster waved his hand with a smile.

Levi mulled a bit over the word “hope” in his sentence.

Levi went underground after she had the headmaster temporarily remove the seal on the entrance to the underground maze.

A simple stone path, where she could only see five metres ahead, greeted her there. However, the stone walls emitted a creepy faint blue glimmer, so it wasn’t necessary to prepare a light source. Still, the light seemed rather suspicious, so she was reluctant about touching the walls.

Her wary ears heard some music from no particular direction.

“A maze with BGM, how elaborate.”

The instrument was probably a violin. It was a music she usually heard for enjoyment, but...

The song was a creepy one, making you restless just from hearing it.

A tone that penetrated the core of her consciousness.

There were ways to protect your sense of sight, but not your sense of hearing or smell. Thus, it could be assumed that the listener of this music was automatically befallen by some kind of magic effect.

Levi attempted to clench and open her hands and to sway her legs to and fro.

“Seems to be no restriction on my movements.”

She concluded that the music was not to restrain intruders.

Then she took a step forward, as if to say “no problem then”. In that moment.

CLICK

The harmless stone paving at her feet had become a switch.

SSH!

A sharp blade passed by the tip of her nose and cut the bangs over her hidden eye a bit.

It had been a huge sword that appeared from an opening in the wall.

The blade went back into the wall at once after it targeted Levi for a short moment.

“I see. It’s that kind of a maze.”

She showed a fearless smile...

Without any hesitation, Levi dashed forward at once.

In that very moment, various triggers activated nearly at the same time.



A pit trap, a lowering spiked ceiling, a shower of arrows, etc, etc.

There were all kind of traps that aimed at getting rid of invaders to the bitter end.

“Hmm, I’m a ninja, so I don’t give a damn, but these traps would immediately kill an average mage...”

PLING!

Along with the sound of a bowstring popping, an arrow was fired at Levi’s head. Noticing that arrow and avoiding it by either moving forwards or backwards would trigger a pit fall and one would fall down. Nevertheless, if one tried to stop the arrow or evade it on the spot, the “silent arrow” fired at the same time would pierce oneself. Multi-layered traps like that were left and right. Levi simply escaped them with just her physical abilities of cutting down all the arrows that came flying at her with the knife in her hand.

“They want my life... That’s for sure.”

On a closer look, a large number of “silhouettes” emerged from the back of the path.

They squirmed formlessly. In some cases, it took the shape of a human, the shape of a beast or the shape of something indefinable.

“When the traps don’t get you, the monsters appear. What’s more, they trigger all remaining traps on their way...”

The moment a monster stepped on a switch on the path.

SPLASH!

Fluid venom spew out from the wall and through the air. Levi parried that venom with her muffler and flung herself on the ground.

CLACK. At the same time, the floor under her opened because a different monster stepped on a switch. Countless spears were set up beneath it.

“Though this is a piece of cake, since I’m a ninja!”

While saying that, Levi ran on the surface of the wall. The monsters came after her in a hurry, as they hadn’t anticipated that their opponent would ignore gravity.

“Hop.”

Even when there were high-level monsters with intelligence amongst them, in front of Levi, they were no different from the other small fry around here. They were torn into pieces in no time, disappearing without a trace. No traps or monsters could stop Levi’s advance and she passed through the extremely lethal maze like it was her garden.

“Anyhow, the mage in here must hate humans quite a lot, seeing as she ‘keeps everything away’ to such an extent...”

In a word, this underground maze was created by the mage residing at the deepest point of it. This construction, rejecting all visitors and trying to kill them thoroughly, mirrored her mindset.

How typical of a powerful mage, Levi came to her senses with that in mind.

“It’ll be impossible to help a person that wants to kill people so bad.”

She firmly renewed the grip on her knife.

Then she became a blast of wind that swept through the maze.

The maze had a complicated interior, but Levi reached the deepest part only one hour after she entered it. There she found an iron door that was several sizes of a person. Most likely, this was the final trap and something would happen if she tried to open it. That was what her years of experience told her.

However, Levi was already sick of playing along with this “farce”. She drew her ninja blade from her side in a flash.

The door was cut into pieces in an instant and crumbled.

The iron pieces of the door fell onto the ground with a DON and Levi climbed over them unhurried.

“Oho...”

The room beyond it was a hall as huge as the academy’s auditorium.

And countless monsters, obviously of a different calibre than before, filled it clamouring. Their eyes shone red and were filled with a glint as if the hatred of the whole world was manifested in them.

In the middle of the hall— A soundly sleeping girl floated in midair.

She was lying down on empty space.

And a cross-shaped light spilled from under her peacefully closed eyelids.

“‘Phantom Cross Eye’. Dreadful magic eyes that send everything reflected in it into a riff between dream and reality... How troublesome. Fuh...”

Levi recalled the information concerned the evil eye and sighed on a rare occasion.

The monsters gathered in this maze didn’t come here attracted by a strong magical power. Rather, they appeared in this world because this girl connected “her dream world with reality”.

In other words, the dream the girl was seeing was overflowing with monsters.

There monsters spawned infinitely and never exhausted.

Yes.

This girl had already linked this world with her dream of destruction and arranged a path towards its end just because she was sleeping.

“Mhm— Not bad.”

Words of admiration left Levi’s mouth. The girl wasn’t exerting the high magical power she was born with to her heart’s content, but locked herself up inside the dream and let its destruction affect the world.

That was the sorcery of the sleeping girl.

“She doesn’t know whether the world was destroyed or not because she’s sleeping all the time... Yet, she keeps researching her magic in her sleep.”

Even without witnessing its outcome, the result of her magic was related to the result of her research.

In time, the endless flood of monsters would break the headmaster's barrier and spill out into the world.

No one could match an "immeasurable amount" of enemies, no matter how strong.

That was the reason why Levi unstintingly admired the girl's magic and research.

"But not good enough yet. She could only prepare such meagre numbers. Defeating me will be impossible. I'm a ninja after all."

Levi wouldn't have been so sure if she had come here later. If she had come here maybe tomorrow instead of today, a number of monsters large enough to defeat her might have been there.

She had that kind of impression.

However, the current amount of monsters couldn't defeat Levi. Because her exhaustion amounted to zero after she had defeated hundred of monsters and escaped the traps on her way here.

"Well then..."

So Levi readied her knife to slaughter the whole lot. At that time.

The crowded monsters split and a single humanoid monster came forward.

To describe its appearance with one word: "clown".

Small arms and legs, clothes that were strangely inflated on its shoulders and waist, and lastly a pointed hood on its head.

That clown monster stopped in front of Levi and bowed respectfully.

“Uh-oh. A boss character or what?”

After Levi returned the greeting, she readied her knife.

However.

The monster in front of her eyes suddenly disappeared.

“!?”

Levi instantly threw herself down on the ground.

The hand of the monster, swung like a sword, went through empty space, where her neck had been a second before.

“It’s faster... than me.”

She tried to gain some distance at once, but the monster was faster than her by far... Although it didn’t get ahead of her, it was only a matter of time until it would catch up with her.

The moment she realized that, Levi switched into battle mode right away.

Normally, it would be hard to find someone in this world, who possessed an even higher speed than Levi.

Levi had invested the same amount of time into improving her techniques, as a mage, who researches the speed of light or sound, would have invested into speed, if such magic were to exist.

And of all things, this monsters surpassed Levi in speed. In other words, the monster definitely possessed a speed that was top class in the world at the current stage.

At the same time she determined that, she executed her countermeasures against faster opponents.

“Ninja Arts: ‘Binding Chains of Shadow Threads’!”

Various shadow threads stretched out from Levi’s shadow and fanned out.

The threads coiled themselves around the monster and then started to cut it into pieces by themselves right away.

The shadow threads had no density. In other words, they were extremely flat and sharp as they glided over the monster.

SNAP. The body of the monster scattered in all directions.

Levi made a small sigh of relief.

However—

The face of the monster, who should’ve been cut into pieces just now, appeared right next to hers.

“Wha!”

She twisted her body, mostly from a survival instinct, but the hand of the monster, swung like a sword, deeply cut into her left arm and flesh blood splattered.

Another one... Not quite. Then the mangled one regenerated... Not quite.

Levi desperately searched for an answer while the hole in her left arm gave her an intense pain. The opponent was faster than her. Her techniques didn’t work on the opponent. The opponent was beyond her comprehension.

Just like an enemy from a dream.

The moment Levi became aware of that, she took the ninja knife in her right hand and—

pierced her own throat without hesitation.

“Ugh”

It had been her first time piercing her own throat, so a pain she had never felt before struck her. Something gluey spilled out of her mouth and she felt depleted as the blood in her head got lesser at once.

Even so, she pulled the knife to the side as it was.

Her neck was split with a snap and the blood gushed out with a whistling sound.

This action could only be considered as suicide. However, it had been an extremely natural choice for her. An opponent faster than her... She never expected that such a thing existed, but it did. Likewise, she had never expected that a monster existed, who would be unharmed after getting hit by her ninja technique, yet it did.

And not even in her wildest dreads did she ever expect that a monster would be beyond her comprehension, but it existed...

Levi might have hesitated with the tough measure if it had been one or two of these points.

However, when three unthinkable factors came together at the same time, she regarded it as a “fabrication”.

In other words, it was possible that she had been trapped into the dream world, too, when she stepped into this room or even when she stepped into the underground maze already.

The fastest way to find that out was to kill herself.

At least to Levi, since she had trained herself to always keep a ruthless mind as a ninja. And since she didn't even expect herself to survive.

Her own "life" didn't hold much value to her.

.....

When she woke up, she stood in a hall without a single monster.

A luxury bed was positioned in its middle and on it slept the girl from earlier.

Levi's body was completely unhurt again. Needless to say, that included her throat and no blood was gushing out. For her, that was proof that everything until now had been a dream.

"Fuh. I'm surprised that I was dragged into a dream without even realizing it. It's my first time meeting such a crazy mage, who disregards herself to such an extent and can produce such a terrific dream world. So incredible free of avarice, the 'Avaritia' archive, huh."

There was nothing abnormal with her body. She could move her arms and legs normally, too.

After confirming that much, Levi readied her knife and approached the bed.

“No one... can expect that someone like you regains her original humanity...”

Levi put her hand besides the head of the sleeping girl and gazed upon her face.

“I don’t even know if my words reach you. My mission... is to become friends with you. Therefore...”

Then she held her knife to the girl’s throat.

“Do you want to become friends?”

When Levi declared that —

The sound of a violin started to resound around her.

She had never heard that song before, but it was different from the one she had heard at the entrance of the maze and had a gentle melody that calmed the heart.

The song at the beginning of the maze most likely was to “get rid of everything”.

And the song playing right now was to accept Levi.

“Mm—”

Concluding that, Levi closed her eyes.

Then she was sucked into the dream, where the girl was playing the music.

When she came to, she was in a girly room with adorable furnishing.

On top of the bed, a girl with blonde hair was playing a violin.

The girl stopped playing when she noticed Levi... and directed her clear eyes at her.

“Did you call out to Yui just now?”

The “Phantom Cross Eye” was visible in these eyes. A threat that could discharge a dangerous magical power, looked straight at Levi.

“Yeah, I did. I asked if you wanted to become friends.”

“...Friends... Friends, huh... Hmm.”

As Yui had a hard time evaluating that term, she pondered with her arms crossed.

“You see, Yui can get all results and research just from sleeping. So Yui doesn’t need the outside world, much less friends.”

“Seems so. I, too, was fascinated about the kind of perfect research environment here.”

“Oh really? That kinda makes me happy.”

Seeing Yui smile softly, Levi’s inner meddlesome side appeared.

“I can’t take you outside, but I can show you the outside world and talk about it.”

“Oh? You can? Is it fun?”

Fun? As Levi didn’t expect anything by nature, she asked herself a bit what the world was like and then...

“Really fun!”

Levi declared her true feelings. She was a ninja to the core. So much that her heart was frozen. So much that she didn’t expect anything. So much that even her own life became a tool.

But for that very reason, because she didn’t expect anything, the outside world showed her all kind of brand new things she didn’t know about.

The concept of “disappointment” didn’t exist within Levi.

So it was meaningful to come in contact with everything.

Shamanic Spell was a magic that fused the power of mother nature and oneself.

Consequently, she was the Trinity Seven of that magic.

“I see. Really fun, hmm... Yui’s thema is ‘Amicitia’. Because I’ve no clue about it. Why would you seek another person?”

“Let’s see. I make use of friends when I want to play or when I’m troubled.”

“You use them?”

“Friends make use of each other. Before you know, you have a mysterious bond to said person and that’s what we call a friend.”

“Oho, certainly sounds worth researching!”

Yui perceived the sense “interesting” for the first time.

A sparkling light filled her previously clouded eyes. The jet-black coated “Phantom Cross Eyes” within her eyes also turned slightly red.

“Ahaha, I was just thinking how boring it would be to only research the destruction of the world like this, so it might be a good timing.”

Her expression revealed an adorable girlishness, too.

“I take that as an okay then. Let me introduce myself: I’m Kazama Levi.”

“I’m Kurata Yui! Yui in the meaning of being alone!”

Levi was convinced upon hearing the meaning of the name she had heard for a while now.

Yui was the only one in this world. A mage, who should just stay in the dream forever.

It was easily conceivable that her magic already flourished when she was born and that her talent had claimed various sacrifices.

That might be the reason why Yui had secluded herself in her own dream and got rid of everything from the outside, so that no one would get close to her. Did that come from a sympathy or kindness within her?

“...Actually, my name is an alias.”

“Ahaha, it’s okay. Yui knows that you don’t tell your magic name that easily. Yui isn’t my true name either.”

“Good to hear. Then let’s get along, Yui-san.”

“Yeah, let’s, Levi-chan!”

Like this, the two of them became “friends” in two opposite meanings of the word.

Levi didn't expect at all that Yui would rehabilitate and become a good mage, whereas Yui was only curious about the existence that represented unknown values to her.

Both of them really didn't need another person.

Precisely because of that, the two of them conversely sought another person for research.

(In other words, we might be two of the same kind)

Levi mumbled that in her heart.

* * *

While recalling this, Levi looked at Yui, who clung to Arata with a smile.

Back then, Yui had been a mage that didn't need "friendship", but now she seemed to enjoy being part of their group.

Then she looked at Arata, who had helped Yui.

Yui had caused a breakdown phenomenon, albeit through a coincidence, and the demon lord candidate had analyzed her overflowing, enormous magical power and cancelled it.

Since he erased and controlled the vast magical power, Yui was able to leave her dream, leave the underground maze now.

Levi hadn't expected this at all.

She had thought that Yui would spent her life in the deepest part of the maze to all eternity.

“Mh? What’s up, Ninja?”

Arata noticed Levi’s gaze and tilted his head puzzled.

“Nothing much, I was just thinking whether my ninja aphrodisiac would work on you or not.”

“You must not use something like that!”

Lilith retorted faithfully to Levi’s random reply, whereat Levi laughed with “Nishishi” while she thanked her in her heart.

Lilith had brought Arata here.

If not for that, Yui wouldn’t be with them here now.

And Levi herself wouldn’t have spent such fulfilling days either.

Therefore.

If anything were to happen— No, something was bound to happen.

She would never expect “nothing to happen”.

So Levi was always prepared for battle.

Even at a time like this, where she was frolicking with everyone.

Even at times, where she was all by herself.

Always maintaining a tension, she was ready to cope with any situation.

To protect her friends... her comrades.

“If you’ve got something like that, you drink it first, Ninja.”

When Arata suggested something outrageous, Lilith and Mira looked daggers at him.

“Hoho, you even want to add myself as a harem member, Arata-san?”

“Naturally... But when you take the aphrodisiac and become all smitten, you’ll be able to take it a bit more easy, right? I think it’s alright to take a break from watching over everyone once in a while.”

Levi widened her eyes in surprised upon his words.

Then her mouth, which normally always had an answer ready, opened and closed speechless.

—Geez, this boy.

He surely hadn’t said that because he understood everything. Rather, it had been a whim, a hunch or some similar vague reason that made him say that, like always.

But it served as the perfect blade to pierce Levi’s heart.

“Hmm... Okay, then I’ll make a drug that makes one smitten with you, Arata-san.”

She said so— even though she had no intention to make it.

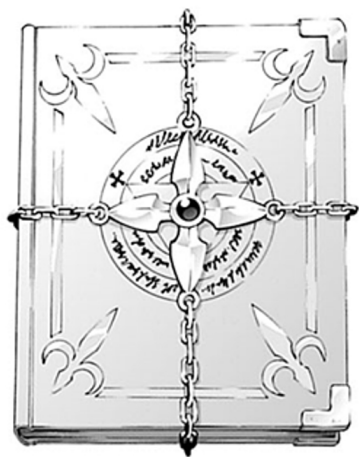
“Haha, I’m looking forward to it.”

She herself wouldn’t expect anything.

However, her weakness was...

“Guess I’ll have to work hard to answer your expectations”.

Levi realized that she was quietly smiling from happiness while a gentle feeling spread in her chest.



06

エラプセッド リメイニング・タイム
経過時間と残り時間

Chapter 05: Elapsed & Remaining Time

While chatting with everyone, I unconsciously ended up observing Arata's behaviour.

Even though he was woken up in the middle of the night, he was listening to their stories happily. And because he looked really happy, everyone just kept talking on and on.

Even the usually uptight Mira-san joined the conversation. Arata truly was a peculiar person. Well, a bit perverted, though.

"Myah..."

Just as one story ended, Yui leaned against Arata and looked sleepy. We certainly had passed quite some time with an enjoyable chat.

"Everyone, it has gotten late. Let us disband now."

As a teacher I ought to guide them, so I suggest that to everyone.

"Fine."

"Okay..."

As if it was the most natural thing in the world, Arin-san headed towards Arata's bed and Yui-san was about to crawl under his blanket.

"Hey, you must not do that."

I rebuked the two of them as I kind of had gotten the feeling to grant Arata a peaceful sleep now.

"Indeed, we overstayed his welcome. Akio, we're going."

"Oh, you don't want to ask him about sleeping together, Boss?"

"I have not the slightest intention to do so! Good night!"

Mira-san raised her voice in reply to Akio-san's teasing and then they left the room first.

"Sis, you won't get to assault him in his sleep tonight, so let's go back to our room."

"Hm, yeah. Suddenly doing it with all of us would be quite the challenge."

"Geez, there you go again, talking like you have experience when you actually don't..."

"T- True, but I read tons about it!"

Selina-san and Liese-san left the room while chatting friendly. Unexpectedly, the younger sister might be the level-headed one amongst these two.

"Okay, I'll bring Yui-san back. You coming, too, Arin-san?"

"Yes. I'll postpone the child-making with my husband to some other time."

"You must not make a child either!"

"...How complicated."

Carrying Yui-san, who had fallen asleep, Levi-san walked out of the room, too, in company with Arin-san.

"Good night, girls!"

Arata made a small sigh while waving everyone good-bye.

"You deserve your rest, Arata."

"Not like I did anything. If anything, you deserve it for watching over us, Lilith."

I got somewhat embarrassed when he appreciated my doing so naturally.

"As a teacher, I cannot overlook it when girls gather in the room of a boy."

"You're a girl yourself, Lilith."

"I am a teacher before that."

"Mhm, is that so? The same goes for the ninja, but you should relax a bit more around the others, okay?"

"M- Maybe, but..."

But.

To tell the truth, I didn't really know how to relax and interact with Arata.

For example, I was able to cut loose a bit with the fantastic view in the hot spring, but now, all alone with him in his room....

...All alone?

When I noticed it, I was the only girl remaining in the room.

"Ah..."

"Mh?"

All alone with a boy in his room at night. My face unconsciously turned red due to that fact.

"N- Nothing! I should get going, too."

“Yeah, sure.”

After quickly approaching the door, I bowed briefly to Arata.

“G- Good night then.”

“Yup, night, Lilith.”

“Sleep well... Arata.”

I got out into the hallway and closed the door with a clatter.

For a moment, I halted there...but he made no attempts at locking the door. Now I understood how Arin-san and Yui-san could sneak in so easily.

It surely symbolized his personality of never refusing a guest.

And he enjoyed it when everyone acted to their heart's content.

—The complete opposite of oneself: A magic thema.

Arata's thema was “Impel”.

“Certainly might be his opposite.”

I mumbled that while I walked down the corridor to my room.

The girls, gathering around him, had a rather open attitude. Just earlier, Levi-san had eased her usual tension. He was a natural lady-killer for sure.

Somehow, I ended up in a sour mood, but brushed it off with the resignation that there was “nothing to be done about Arata”. His true nature might prefer a natural character that lived true to oneself and of its own free will without forcing through its own way on everything.

—I was always reminded of the fact that despite this side of his, he is a “demon lord candidate” with a “demon lord” element.

He can use our magic and even control the demon lord arms now.

His strength as a mage easily reached a top-level in such a short time, too.

He unintentionally had walked on a “short cut to magic”.

All because he met us, the Trinity Seven.

“.....”

The fact that he was gradually turning into a demon lord might meant that he himself was changing.

He might become an existence that destroys this world.

— At first, I recognized the demon lord as the ultimate and dearest goal for a mage.

However, once he awakened to his power and we went through various incidents, I realized that I was wrong.

The demon lord was a system to destroy this world. The system activated through coming in contact with us Trinity Seven and before long, it will destroy the world in various ways.

My body trembled with a shiver.

Just imagining Arata becoming something like that was dreadful.

The conception existed that even the destruction of the world merely derived from the research results when a mage enlarged upon studies and research. Even in my alchemy, the consequence that “the world will not retain its shape” was presupposed for the

ultimate secret art to transform all things and aiming for that was the mission of a mage as well.

However, I didn't want this world to be destroyed for now, if possible.

I wanted to spend more time with Arata and the others.

A part of myself ended up thinking like that.

Maybe I was a failure as a researcher and mage? Or maybe this conflict, too, was a necessity for advancing magic? As a teacher, I would have to find an answer quickly.

"Hah....."

While such thoughts crossed my mind, my chest started to feel heavy.

I had no confidence that I would be able to sleep when I got back to my room.

— At that moment.

"Ah..."

I noticed that I had forgotten the key to my room in Arata's room.

In need, I could open the door by transforming the lock, but....

"...I would rather like to go back to fetch it."

Obedying my heart once in a while, I turned back in the hallway I just came from.

And then I stood in front of his room....

"...He ought to be asleep already."

I would leave when there was no answer after I knocked carefully.

Resolved like that, I knocked so lightly that it was uncertain whether I touched the door or not.

KNOCK... KNOCK...

"Mh? Who's there?"

But regardless of this small sound, Arata replied immediately.

"Uhm, I forgot something."

"Oh, Lilith. Come in!"

When I opened the door with permission, the room was dark, since the light had been turned off.

Arata was standing at the window in the pitch-black room and looked my way.

"Indeed. The key's lying where you sat earlier. You're an unexpected scatterbrain."

"Auh... Since I actually lost it, I cannot deny it."

"Haha, well, you're better off behaving like that from time to time."

At the window, Arata quietly smiled under the moonlight.

It seemed like he had been watching the moon from the window of the dark room the whole time.

"You are not going to sleep, Arata?"

After I entered the room and picked up the key, I asked him.

"Guess not. When I was thinking about what everyone told me, I couldn't sleep anymore. So I decided to stay up until I get sleepy."

“...What about the Grimoires?”

“Sound asleep. I overused them lately, so they’re sleeping well.”

“I see...”

In his case, his Grimoires had their own will and magical power. It was like having two servants, who could freely use magic, so when Arata himself became unable to fight, he always had powerful comrades at his side, ready to give him their full support at any time.

The reason that these two girls always had to rest was that Arata had excessively kept fighting lately.

“Staying up late is actually bad for your studies, you know?”

“But it’s fine once in a while.”

“Yes, when it does not exceed once in a while.”

Staying up late was especially a method for when you wanted to think about a lot of things. Magic meant to go against the ordinary. But it also meant that going against it shouldn’t become the ordinary. A delicate dosage was necessary.

“Well, let’s take a little walk, Lilith.”

“Eh? ...Yes, okay.”

My usual self might have refused of course. But... Today, one part of me thought it would be alright once in a while and wanted to go against the ordinary.

While everyone else was sleeping soundly, I walked through the garden of the Academy together with Arata.

As he walked next to me, he was strangely quiet today... and looked rather mature.

A complicated feeling, partly uncomfortable, partly embarrassing, partly sort of happy, took hold of me.

Somehow or other, this might be a good atmosphere.

Wait, what was I thinking about?

I shook my head flustered to clear away my elated consciousness.

"Mh?"

Arata tilted his head puzzled.

"D- Do not mind me!"

I ended up speaking with a shrill voice.

"Oh really. Ok then."

Something must be wrong with me today and Arata was strangely kind today of all days. I unconsciously felt like gazing upon his profile...

Once again, I shook my head flustered.

"Wh- What are your thoughts after hearing about everyone's past?"

I tried asking that, since I wanted to change the topic for a bit.

Thereupon, Arata placed his hand against his chin thoughtful.

"Mages live an interesting life."

"Interesting... you say?"

Considering that he had lived an absolutely normal life, Arata was supposed to see most of the girls' lives as quite tough.

Yet he sum it up in the single word "interesting". Now I tilted my head puzzled.

"Yeah. If I had to choose, I prefer the present over the past. As I see it, everyone can get along and smile now because they went through some kind of trouble in the past, and that makes me happy. In that sense, stories of the past are simply interesting."

He wasn't pitying them. Nor did he have consideration for it.

He merely considered our ideologies or past as a mage as interesting.

Maybe that was the reason, why we... felt so comfortable around him, even when he was a mage, whose existences was originally out of place with this world.

"Pft... Ahahaha!"

So I unconsciously burst out in laughter.

"Wh- What's with you all of a sudden? Did I say something funny?"

"Yes. I think you are the most interesting one, Arata."

I was sure that he was already born with this personality and sympathized with "Hijiri-san", who probably spend a lot of time with him since they were young and now was sought by him, for a little bit.

Because Arata still was a young boy at heart, seeing as he perceived a lot of things as interesting and fun.

Most likely — An earnest love was still impossible for him.

A few faces of the Trinity Seven, who were undoubtedly in love with Arata, were called to my mind and I snickered.

“Muh... What’s with you, geez.”

It was interesting as well how Arata puckered his lips.

“So, Lilith, what kind of life did you live and how did you become a mage?”

“Oh, me? I’m... well, I didn’t know it myself until recently, because it seems that I came from a different world.”

“Right, you said something about that before.”

Arata nodded recalling.

“Thus I lived at an orphanage the whole time. Of course I was properly studying there and wanted to get a decent job in the future, but... one day, the headmaster came to pick me up, after he had detected my latent magical power. I might be the same as Arinsan in that regard.”

“I see. The headmaster’s really amazing after all.”

“Well, since he... or a ‘Paladin’ in general, is another ‘top-class’ existence apart from the Trinity Seven or Demon Lord.”

“Immortal with eternal youth, or something like that?”

“Yes. He accomplished such a spell, too, I am sure. Being a mage basically means to immerse oneself in research for a long time, so first you experiment in the field about preserving your body and soul.”

"I get it. You girls haven't done it yet?"

"No, I already have. Or more precisely, I was born with it apparently. Well, I recognize it as the lineage of my father by now."

"Ohoo... Wait, can you become immortal with eternal youth so easily!?"

"It seems that mages, who were born with a powerful magical power, automatically stop aging at the optimum age. So you might already have obtained immortality."

"For real?"

"Yes. You are a born demon lord candidate after all."

"I see, it goes like that... Guess I can forget about growing into an attractive middle-aged man then."

Arata looked at his own hand and closed his eyes. I would have never thought that he had a dream like that.

"Arata..."

I unconsciously called out to him worried, whereupon

"Whatever."

he quickly gave up on it and lost interest.

"Eh, are you sure?"

"Mh? I mean, you girls will be immortal, too, right? So I figured it's alright as long as I'm with everyone."

".....Ah....."

Together with everyone. For some reason, I was extremely happy to hear that.

"Fufu, you are right. I can see that happening."

My chest started to feel warm inside and I nodded with a smile.

"Anyway.... You sure are ready to accept anything, Arata."

Some way or other, I was happy that he was that way.

I unconsciously leaned my shoulder against his arm.

"O- Oh?"

I rejoiced at seeing him surprised and bashful.

I feared that I was maybe too bold, but getting this reaction out of him was worth the risk.

"Haaah..."

Then I slowly let out a long sigh from the bottom of my chest.

"Mm... Don't take everything upon yourself either, Lilith. The other's will be there for you and I, too, am working hard, so that you don't have to overdo it."

When he caressed my shoulder, my face involuntarily turned bright red.

"Eh, for me...?"

"Duh. I know you're giving your best and worry about us every time. Obviously I want to repay you."

Arata grinned at my surprised self.

Suddenly, my heart was beating at an alarming rate.

"Th- Thank you..."

"You're welcome, I guess?"

For some reason, I couldn't take my eyes off him. His face seemed really close.

For some reason, I concentrated on his lips.

And then... his face somehow got even closer.

Whereupon...



RUSTLE

“Wawah! Sis, don’t push me!”

“Ah, sorry, Selina. I was just so jealous.”

“Remaining hidden is really... complicated.”

“Arin-chan, you were all ready to jump out of the thicket ahead of me.”

“Hey Boss, should the chief inspector really be spying on others?”

“Wha!? Y- You suggested it, Akio...!”

“Calm down, everyone. Lilith-sensei has turned all rigid.”

By the time the seven girls had come out of the thicket in the garden, I had completely stiffened up.

They had without a doubt seen and heard everything.

“Eh, Ah, Eh...”

Arata clapped my shoulder as I didn’t know what to do.

“Lilith...”

“Ah, yes...?”

I looked up to him expectantly.

“Now that it’s come to this, let’s continue. Mm~”

Arata suddenly brought his face closer and I totally panicked.

“Eh, ah, EH, eh, Eh!?”

“Yay~ Go for it~ Kiss~!”

“Arata-kun, I’m next!”

“The best comes for last, namely the legal wife.”

The other girls said whatever they wanted while Arata brought his face closer and closer...

“N- Not happening!”

WHOOSH!! I immediately turned my Grimoire into a giant gun.

“I, I will put you all to sleep!! With my sleeping bullets!!”

I blew up and didn’t care for anything anymore as my embarrassment had hit its upper limit.

“Eh, wha– wait, Lilith!!”

“Silence!”

The mood had been so good a moment ago.

However. Someway or other, this bustling relationship still might be better.

For Arata and me. And for the other girls.

—Such a thought crossed my mind while I wildly fired the sleeping bullets like a machinegun.

* * *

“Oh my, they seem to have fun every day...”

The headmaster watched Lilith and the others act like that from the rooftop.

From his position it was too dark and too far to see anything with a normal vision.

But neither darkness, nor distance, meant anything for him.

“The school festival is drawing closer — A large number of mages will get together from all over the world.”

The headmaster gazed into the distance.

In its line... a large magical power gradually concentrated.

“The Saint of Resurrection... I see.”

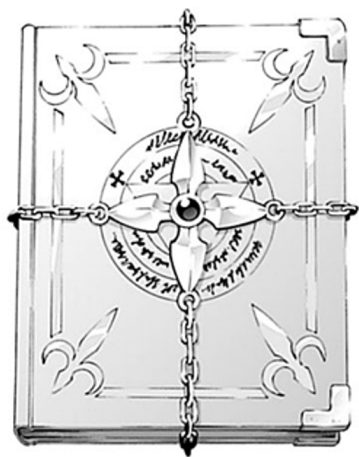
He comprehended something, adjusted his glasses and smiled.

Then he spread his arms and declared to the sky... No.

To the whole world.

“This world doesn’t have much time left. At least... make it a fun world, Administrator (Demon Lord) Arata-kun.”

His voice quietly resonated through the darkness.



07

プリンシプル ビフォー・ゼロ
原因少女と零の前

Chapter 06: Principle & Before Zero

Around the time when Arata-san was slowly awakening to the Demon Lord through the contact with the Trinity Seven.

I, Kazuga Hijiri, went to sleep inside the crystal, a magical item, to attain the power to stop him.

Normally, I would be unable to maintain my body for a long time. My existence would fade and be removed from this world.

However, it was possible to extend that time by storing a large amount of magical power in the crystal beforehand. This time, I had carefully accumulated magical power, so I shouldn't disappear as quickly as before.

But... I certainly regretted that I had to resort to this.

The average life I had with Arata-san would never return.

Still, since I turned into an existence removed from this world, into a "magical being", I now was able to oppose the Demon Lord.

If the world was to be destroyed by the Demon Lord.

Then it was someone removed from the world, who could destroy him.

—Therefore.

Please wait for me, Arata-san.

I kept on waiting silently while thinking that.

To this day... I've continued to wait for him ever since I was small.

So it was no big deal to wait a little bit longer now.

Yes.

From an very early age, I was already dispatched to the side of the Demon Lord Candidate as a magician.

* * *

A Demon Lord Candidate was already born into this world.

Born into a completely average family, he saw the light of day in a completely average hospital.

He then lived the life of a completely average person.

Apparently he didn't have any magical power at that point yet.

In other words, he was completely average, just like his family.

However, the brother of his father was actually... a magician.

And that magician happened to be my father.

To make a long story short, I, Kazuga Hijiri, was Arata-san's genuine cousin.

That said, neither my father... nor my mother, also a magician, ever revealed that fact to me. I, a natural-born magician, grew up as a normal girl, too.

Needless to say, I would only find out later that he was a Demon Lord Candidate.

The principal of the Royal Liber Academy, Master Liber, was said to "know about everything", so he immediately perceived his birth.

And since my parents were agents for the Liber Academy, I naturally was a student there, too.

While I was still young, the principal of the academy gave me an order.

“Observe the Demon Lord Candidate and dispose of him if necessary.”

At that time I was only six years old.

I already knew what I was supposed to do at an age too young to even get into a normal elementary school.

Eliminating the Candidate when the Demon Lord Element shows signs of awakening. And without trace, if possible.

The initial plan was to observe him from afar, but... his parents passed away in a plane crash at that time. It was unknown whether the crash was an accident or caused by magic. Anyway, due to it, my parents took him in and I lived together with him.

Even while attending an elementary school in the neighbourhood with Arata-san, I was fighting in the shadows as a magician of the Liber Academy. Thanks to the “Astil Manuscript” and “Ilias Fragment”, which I had by birth, I was already stronger than my parents. I couldn’t do any of the typical things of an elementary school girl and only Arata treated me kindly. Thinking back on it now, he had already been good at taking care of others back then.

And when he got into middle school, he started to develop a perverted side typical to his age.

At that time, I often encountered embarrassing situations with him, as his luck in that regard was outstanding, but now, I only have an

“oh well” feeling for it. By the way, I had always slapped him on these occasions, so I actually might have trained his resilience.

It happened then on a certain day after we got into high school.

“Hijiri-chan, do you know that black shadows appear in town lately?”

Hearing that story from a classmate, I thought “that again” to myself.

Arata-san’s very existence seemed to attract monsters and I had exterminated numerous of them since elementary school.

No matter how often I used the magic sonar, it never showed an reaction to him, yet the monsters must see something in him.

Still, it bothered me that the rumour came about from the witness of a normal person this time, because I had set up runes all over the city, which should react to anything magical.

At lunch break, I got out into the courtyard of the school and called forth my “Ilias Fragment”.

“Hijiri, what’s up?”

The small grimoire with chains as a kind of accessory asked me.

“I want to check upon a rumour about a monster, so take over for me. Also, stay together with Arata-san as much as possible today. Something might approach him.”

“Yes, understood.”

The grimoire sparkled and then— there stood “myself” in front of me.

Whenever I went out on a mission as a magician, Ilia would take my place.

“Okay, I’m counting on you, Ilia.”

“Sure, Hijiri. Please be careful.”

“No worries. I still got Sora with me.”

When I showed her my “Astil Manuscript”, Ilia made a slightly troubled expression.

‘Yep. Don’t you worry and go flirt with the lad.’

“I, I won’t flirt with him!”

Ilia turned bright red and denied it while she peeked at me.

Her reaction was so easy to read. Well... I was having feelings for Arata-san, too, so I decided that Ilia would avoid getting exposed when she acted like that.

Sora was always trying to seduce him when she transformed into me, so Ilia was usually entrusted with the task to substitute for me.

“Well then, I’m off. Make sure to make dinner.”

“Yes. Be careful, Hijiri.”

Leaving the later classes and Arata-san to Ilia, I snuck out of school.

With the Chaos Rune, I made myself unrecognizable to normal people.

It was a simple Macro that “turned away their awareness”, but just from that, everyone paid me no mind, unless someone had really sharp senses.

‘There aren’t any traces of magical power. How are you going to investigate it, Hijiri?’

“First off, I’ll track down the places, where the black shadows appeared. I plan to follow the spiritual spots of this city.”

‘I see. Then we aren’t searching for magical power, but emotions. Then I’ll look for places with a strong “fear”, so activate the macro you have set up around the city, Hijiri.’

“Mhm, okay.”

I used the macro to activate the runes.

That macro activated the runes, which I had drawn with a light invisible to normal people all around town like the shadows of telephone poles, the backside of the guardrails or water towers of mansions.

When a person with magical powers concentrated on these spots, he would see the letters appearing there. But there was nothing he could do about them, unless he was a magician that knew how to, so I didn’t have to worry about the runes getting erased just for giggles.

Right now, a large magic circle was right above the city.

It was one of my large-scale spells as I had lived in this city for many years.

‘Oh, there’s one nearby. Want to head there at once?’

“Yeah, let’s.”

The place Sora was imagining was the public park close to the school.

It was a relatively large park with a jogging or walk course through a forest.

I concentrated my magical power and jumped over the rooftops for a shortcut. Since I was camouflaged with magic right now, concealing me from the eyes of normal people, I could do such a bold move without starting a ruckus.

TMP.

When I landed in front of a bench in the park, a rune letter glowed behind the bench.

‘There seems to be something right here. I sense a lot of lingering ‘fear’.’

“Really?”

Even when I looked around the vicinity, I saw nothing out of the ordinary in the park right now. Maybe because it was still daytime?

But something must be here, since there was a “strong fear” residing in this place.

While I stood there puzzled, a jogging old man passed behind me on the road.

At that moment, a really bad feeling ran down my spine.

“Mm... Uwaaaah!?”

When I turned around to the scream of the man, I saw that his hands were dissolving into black particles.

“Eh!?”

‘Hijiri, this is... a breakdown phenomenon!’

“A breakdown... phenomenon...?”

In most cases, that was something caused by the magical power from a magician going out of control. It rarely ever occurred naturally and always left behind traces of magical power.

I had never heard of a breakdown phenomenon that was neither natural, nor didn’t have a magician involved.

“Uwaaaah, help me, please...”

While I was unable to do anything, his whole body gradually dissolved into black particles... and these particles disappeared like they were absorbed by the air.

—I couldn’t thoughtlessly rescue people like a hero.

A magician merely deducted the cause and resolved the incident. In most cases it was impossible to save the victims. So even while someone had just disappeared right in front of me... I had to get my act together and prioritize the analysis of the situation.

“Sora, is the fear of that man lingering here?”

‘...Yeah, Hijiri. It has a close resemblance to the lingering fear we located within the city. Judging by its pattern, he “saw something and became scared” ... and it’s a “fear of loss”.’

“In other words...”

I became painfully aware of the fact that I had underestimated the incident.

‘Yeah, there have already been a couple of people gone missing.’

After that, Sora and I went around various places in town... and there we encountered numerous people disappearing by turning into a “black shadow” like before.

Long story short, this incident was occurring over and over. But because there were few, who could “perceive” it, it was only a “rumour” instead of an scandal.

As for those, who could “perceive” it, it were people with a high magic disposition, either inborn or acquired later on. These kind of people would have felt that something was amiss when they saw me jumping from roof to roof, not to mention seeing my substitute attending class for me.

But only one in ten-thousand was like that, so it was nothing to fret about...

‘Hijiri, I found something in common, I think.’

“Something in common? ... You mean in all the people that disappeared?”

‘Yeah. None of them even had a shred of magical power. That is to say, those with no resistance against magical power are disappearing.’

“No way... Then at school, quite a number already...”

It would soon be evening. Yet—

The vicinity was still bright for some reason.

“Sora, look at the sun... I don’t think it’s sinking.”

‘Mh? Ah... That isn’t the ‘sun’. Damn, this isn’t good, Hijiri. We better get out of the city. And as fast as possible, at that.’

“There’s no way I can...”

‘Even you’ll be done for now that the sun has turned black. At first it accumulates power by absorbing people with magical power. Then it strengthens itself further by absorbing those with a little magical power. And lastly, it devours the magicians with high magical power. That’s how that thing works, Hijiri.’

“And something like that occurs naturally...?”

‘Who knows. Maybe it occurred naturally. Maybe it has always been there. For all we know, it could have continued to leech off a small insect and now it finally switched over to humans. By the way, you’re the cause of it in a roundabout way.’

“Eh? Me?”

‘Yeah. It seems to have the ‘Ruina’ element — So it belongs to the ‘Ira’ breakdown phenomenon. This is just my speculation, but I think your direct contact with the Demon Lord Candidate for a long time warped space and the world itself, resulting in it.’

My deeper inner self was unsettled by Sora’s speculation. I wanted Arata-san and this world to stay as they were. I wanted to be with him forever.

My Thema was “Ruina”, because it was the completely opposite of that wish of mine.

Who would have thought that it would bring about this result.

‘Well, it’s pretty much an accident. Or conversely: It’s also conceivable that it waited till now, because you managed to scatter

the magical power of the Demon Lord, who might have awakened now.'

"...So I just ran out of time?"

'Something like that. Everything in this area except the Demon Lord will vanish. Of course that includes you, too, Hijiri. Therefore I recommend you escape at once.'

Sora, the grimoire, was absolutely right. There was no other way to survive but to abandon the townspeople, her friends, parents and even Arata-san.

It was already too late when she noticed it. That was all to it.

Such a thing often happened to a magician, so she couldn't afford to be shocked every single time.

"Let's look for Arata-san. I should be able to rescue at least one person."

'At least one, huh. Well, okay, Hijiri. I'll do as you say.'

"...Thanks, Sora."

I then felt around for Ilia's presence

She was connected to me, since I made a contract with the grimoire. So when I concentrate my consciousness, I could tell where she was right...

"KYAAA!!"

At that very moment, Ilia's scream resounded inside my head.

Don't tell me...

‘She’s practically a mass of magical power, so I don’t think she’ll disappear before you. She might have been attacked by something. Let’s go find out.’

“Attacked by something in this situation? ...Did a monster appear or what?”

‘Who knows. I can’t tell, but I’ve a bad feeling and I smell trouble.’

I couldn’t help but make a wry smile in reaction to Sora’s amused voice.

Ilia ought to be in a dangerous situation that made her scream... without the time to call for help.

I immediately pinpointed her location and started running.

Using runes to strengthen my body, I increased my speed.

“This is the road... back home....”

Ilia must have been on her way home with Arata.

While walking down the familiar road... I shuddered from the fact that more and more people were really vanishing.

I still couldn’t believe that I was at fault for this, even if only indirect.

Or rather, if I had comprehended it, I should’ve advanced as a magician.

Then I would’ve gained a second thema, or maybe even a third, and become a Trinity Seven, the pinnacle of magicians.

However, I didn’t have the time to lament over it or brush up my knowledge right now. I didn’t desire this “Ruina”, but what if its

power affected it over a long time because of that... And if the breakdown phenomenon hadn't occurred, I would've continued to wish that my life with Arata-san lasts forever.

'You're nearly there. It's right under that highway.'

It was a lively area in this city, where a highway run over this road, which had office buildings and mansion lined up next to it. Ilia and Arata-san might have taken a detour, as this road was a bit away from the usual way home.

'Hijiri, stop!'

I wanted to push on, but Sora shouted.

When I quickly came to a halt, I sensed an abnormal presence from ahead.

It was a silhouette that was cloaked by a jet black layer of magical power. And below it— There laid Ilia, reverted back to her book form and most of her magical power drained.

That figure looked like the breakdown phenomenon itself had taken shape and it was emitting a terrifying magical power.

And then I noticed it.

"Arata... -san?"

The moment I mentioned that name to the silhouette.

The "Demon Lord" magical power that was shrouding his body spread all at once—

WHIRRRRR!!

The black sun in the sky emitted an even stronger power and then not only the people walking around here, but the buildings, the asphalt and even the debris and such turned into black particles.

‘Looks like the magical power from the Demon Lord was the final key.’

“Is that so...”

That magical power was no longer covering Arata-san.

Most likely, he had accumulated that magical power for causing the breakdown phenomenon.

—Unknowingly, of course.

In order to destroy this world as the Demon Lord.

Therefore, I slowly approached Arata-san.

“Mh? Uwah, wh- what the!?”

Just when I stood in front of Arata-san and gently hugged Ilia to my chest. He apparently came back to his senses and looked surprised around the vicinity.

“People are disappearing... The city is... destroyed... A black sun in the sky...?”

Dumbfounded, he lost his composure, not comprehending the current situation at all.

—I had never thought that his daily life would end so suddenly.

However, I had been prepared for it to happen eventually.

Therefore—

“Hijiri? H- Hey, what’s going on here? Wh- What...! Uwah!”

WHIRRRR!

The sun sucked up the nearby road, so even the ground under our feet slanted.

Arata-san lost his balance and fell down, but I somehow supported myself by placing my hands on the ground. The terrifying power broke down even the surface and earth.

In a way, this was the first shared encounter in magic between Arata-san and I.

Just kidding.

The future I would’ve had with Arata-san if nothing had happened...

If there only could’ve been a future, where I became his normal wife.

I became sad, thinking about that, so I showed a smile.

“Arata-san, take this!”

I pushed Sora, the legendary grimoire “Astil Manuscript” that could even restrain the Demon Lord, onto Arata-san.

‘Are you sure, Hijiri?’

Sora’s voice resounded in my head, so I nodded.

I would surely be absorbed by that black sun at this rate. Ilia was a mass of magical power, so she should be fine, but my physical body would surely vanish. Together with Sora, I might be able to put up a barrier and survive, but... I still wanted to prioritise Arata-san.

“Hijiri!?”

Taking the small book with the chains, Arata-san made a surprised expression.

His face was practically saying that he had no clue what was going on.

But I no longer had the time to explain it to him, nor the time to do anything for him.

“Please grant my wish and save Arata-san!”

I could only pray to the Astil Manuscript. After it, there was nothing I could do for him. But I was sure if it was Sora, she would...

‘...Okay, Hijiri. It’s a change of master. I had fun with you, you know?’

At the same time I heard her voice, I felt that the portion of magical power from Sora, protecting me, left me. ...It was impossible to withstand the breakdown phenomenon with only the power of a single magician. From that moment on, I was prepared that my magical power would be sucked up by the black sun in the sky.

—To be honest, I was scared of dying.

However, I realized that I was even more scared of something else.

“H- Hey, who’re you talking to? What’s going on, Hijiri!?”

Amidst the breaking world, Arata-san lost his head...

Yet, he still embraced me, so that I wouldn’t get dragged into the breakdown.

Just from that action... my chest was filled with satisfaction.

"...Properly get up in the morning, even without me, okay?"

Raising in his embrace, I looked at his face and spoke.

"And please eat three meals a day. Properly hang out your laundry once every three days or it gets wrinkled. Don't forget to clean, either. Also..."

Ohh.

There were so many things I was worried about.

Arata-san slacked on various things when I wasn't around.

Without me, he often wasn't taking things seriously.

Without me around...

"Also..."

I couldn't stop the tears from flowing out.

So, please.

At least my last wish...

"....."

"!"

I sealed Arata-san's mouth, as he was going to say something incomprehensible, with a kiss.

Though, my dream was to have my first kiss in a more romantic situation.

...A farewell kiss right before the world was destroyed.

That might be quite romantic as well.

“Please don’t forget me...!”

The moment I spoke out these words—

My body was enveloped by particles of light.

“Hijiri.... HIJIRIIIIII!!”

Arata-san reached out his hand and I reached out me right hand,
too....

But his hand only grasped air.

—Like this, I, Kazuga Hijiri, vanished from this world.

And now, Arata-san’s tale began.



トリニティセブンのノベル版を読んでいただき誠にありがとうございます。漫画原作のサイトウケンジです。この度は小説版の執筆をさせていただきました。執筆するにあたり、せっかくだから裏話を書こう! と思ったのがきっかけでトリニティセブンの子たちの話を色々書いてみましたが、いかがだったでしょうか? もしもお気に入りのキャラクターの新しい一面を再発見してくれたり、より好きになってくれたりしたら幸いです。

さて、本編ではなるべく「詳しい説明」を控え、作画の奈央さんに「よろしくお願いします! こう、勢いで!」と預ける部分が多いので、今回のように細かな説明をする機会があったことは嬉しい反面、ちょっといいのかな? などと思っております。漫画はいつも通りノリで、ノベルは「へえー、こういうこともあるんだー」くらいの気分で気楽に読んでいただけたら幸いです。

この度ノベル化のお話を下さった富士見書房さん、色々ご迷惑をおかけした担当編集Tさん、素敵過ぎるイラストをつけてくれた相棒の奈央さん、本当にありがとうございました。そして何より、この本を読んで下さった読者様に多大なる感謝を。

レヴィの太ももが好きな
サイトウケンジ

ちょうど4年前の今頃、年の瀬も近づいた頃だったと思います。「これから一緒に頑張りましょう!」と当時編集部にあった九段下の地下鉄の駅で別れ際に握手を求められ、不意を突かれた私は咄嗟に緊張しっぱなしのせいで汗の滲んだ手で握手をしてしまいました。サイトウさんあの時は気持ち悪くてすみません。あの時始まった漫画が10巻を超える長期連載を経てアニメ化、そしてこの場であとがきを書かせてもらうことになろうとは夢にも思っておりませんでした。これも原作コミックス、そして今! このノベル版を読んで下さっている貴方様のおかげでございます。本当にありがとうございます!

今回、このノベル版が出たことを1番喜んでるのは何を隠そう私自身だと言っても過言ではありません。そう、これで私も読者の方と同じ場所からアラタたちを見ることができるのです! 漫画だとアラタが主人公なのでどうしてもアラタ視点なんです。リリス先生やニンジャの思っていることや考えていることは基本的にはわかりません。ただこれを読むとリリス先生どころか聖やアリンの想いまで描かれている! あーこの子はこんなことまで考えていたのか、なんて良い子なんだろう! とかやっぱニンジャすげえな! と完全に読者として楽しみまくります。本当にごめんなさい。普段の漫画版は自分が描いていることもあり、ちょっと客観的に見れない部分があったりするのですが、今回本当にフラットな視点でトリニティセブンを楽しむことが出来ました。うん、やっぱり面白い! サイトウさん最高ですよこれ! これからもアラタ君をはじめ、7人の美少女魔道士たちを末永くよろしくお願いいたします。

トリニティセブン しちにん ましよつか 7人の魔書使い The
Novel

ナイトエピソード ロストメモリー
深夜挿話と過去記憶

著者：サイトウケンジ

イラスト：な お あきなり 奈央晃徳



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